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A descriptive study of offices of institutional research in Virginia's public senior colleges and universities

Janie C. Jordan

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A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF OFFICES OF
INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH IN VIRGINIA'S
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A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF OFFICES OF
INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH IN VIRGINIA'S
PUBLIC SENIOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

A Dissertation
Presented to
Faculty of the School of Education
College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by

Janie C. Jordan


April 1976

APPROVAL SHEET

We the undersigned do certify that we have read this dissertation and that in our individual opinions it is acceptable in both scope and quality as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Education.



Daniel R. Gerber, Ph.D., Chairman


Royce W. Chesser, M.Ed.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
List of Tables.....	vi
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	2
Context of the Study.....	2
The Problem.....	5
Procedures.....	8
Population.....	9
Methodology.....	11
Summary.....	17
II. A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH.....	20
Introduction.....	20
What is Institutional Research?.....	22
Areas of Emphasis in Institutional Research.....	28
Summary.....	40
III. ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF DATA.....	44
Introduction and Response Rate.....	44
Structure and Functions.....	47
Summary.....	64
Nature and Frequency of Academic Activities.....	66
Summary.....	74

CHAPTER	PAGE
III. Selected Administrators' Perceptions of the Role and Functions of Institutional Research.....	76
Summary.....	97
A Comparison of the Perceptions of Selected Administrators Toward the Role and Func- tions of Institutional Research with the Perceptions of the Directors.....	101
Summary.....	113
Problems and Points of Conflict.....	116
Summary.....	131
IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....	136
Introduction.....	136
Structure and Functions.....	137
Nature and Frequency of Academic Activities.....	140
Selected Administrators' Perceptions of the Role and Functions of Institutional Research.....	141
A Comparison of the Perceptions of Selected Administrators Toward the Role and Functions of Institutional Research with the Perceptions of the Directors.....	144
Problems and Points of Conflict.....	147
Conclusions.....	149
APPENDIX A	153
APPENDIX B	171
BIBLIOGRAPHY	174

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I. Actual Duties and Responsibilities as Ranked by Air Members.....	36
II. Response Rate of Administrators by Institutional Size.....	45
III. Response Rate by Administrative Categories...	46
IV. Status of Chief Administrative Official Charged with the Institutional Research Function.....	49
V. Titles Held by Institutional Research Officials.....	50
VI. Size of Professional Staff in Institutional Research Agencies.....	51
VII. Official to Whom Director of Institutional Research Reported.....	52
VIII. Major Job Responsibilities of Offices of Institutional Research.....	58
IX. Initiators of Institutional Research Studies.	61
X. Per Cent of Institutional Research Offices Reporting Given Types of Studies of Students.	67
XI. Per Cent of Institutional Research Offices Reporting Given Types of Studies of Faculty..	69
XII. Per Cent of Institutional Research Offices Reporting Given Types of Studies on Curriculum and Instruction.....	71
XIII. Selected Recent and Current Academic Studies Undertaken by Offices of Institutional Research.....	74
XIV. Ways Administrators Became Acquainted With Role and Functions of the Office of Institutional Research.....	77

TABLE	PAGE
XV. Activities For Which Administrators Used Data Generated by the Office of Institutional Research.....	80
XVI. Major Function of the Office of Institu- tional Research As Perceived by Administrators.	83
XVII. Major Focus of the Office of Institutional Research as Perceived by Administrators.....	85
XVIII. Administrators' Perceptions: To Which Group is the Office of Institutional Research Considered an Arm?.....	87
XIX. Administrators' Perceptions: Should the Director be the College President's "Right- Hand Man"?.....	89
XX. Major Functions of the Office of Institutional Research as Perceived by Directors.....	102
XXI. Major Functions of the Office of Institutional Research as Perceived by Administrators in Institutions of Different Sizes.....	102
XXII. Major Focus of the Office of Institutional Research as Perceived by Directors.....	105
XXIII. Directors' Perceptions: To Which Group is the Office of Institutional Research Considered an Arm?.....	106
XXIV. Directors' Perceptions: Should the Director Be the College President's "Right-Hand Man"?...	108
XXV. Directors' Perceptions: Preferred Job Responsibilities.....	121
XXVI. Administrators' Satisfaction with the Scope and Nature of Problems Investigated By the Office of Institutional Research.....	127
B-1 Directors' Perceptions of the Office of Institutional Research's Involvement in Given Types of Studies.....	172
B-2 Administrators' Perceptions of the Office of Institutional Research's Involvement in Given Types of Studies.....	173

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF OFFICES OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH
IN VIRGINIA'S PUBLIC SENIOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Context of the Study

In light of developments in the economic, social, and political arena coupled with the pressures for accountability from various state and federal agencies, the role of institutional research has become increasingly significant. At the time of this study, the external environment was an important determinant of the nature and scope of the activities in which an institutional research office was engaging. State legislators and coordinating boards were demanding that these institutions be accountable to their publics.

Accountability was translated into such concepts as program budgeting, cost-benefit analysis, faculty workload analyses, and space utilization. These subjects, among others, constituted the operations-management side of institutional research. They were concerned with the housekeeping problems of higher education administration.

One philosophy of institutional research purported that an office of institutional analysis should be an

administratively oriented office and focus on "studies needed for the making of important decisions about policy and procedures (Russell, 1965, p. 284). Thus, the institutional researchers was viewed as a servant of the administration and the institutional research activities were expected to be applied rather than theoretical. The primary goal of the institutional research office was to find out how "to save money that can be used to better advantage" (Russell, 1965, p. 284).

Others contended that institutional research agencies should be concerned primarily with academic questions. They argued that institutional research offices should focus on such investigations as studies of student admissions, curriculum, student characteristics, student performances, teaching techniques, and faculty characteristics. Under this conception, the work of institutional researchers was expected to focus on the teaching-learning processes. Dressel (1974b) surmised, however that many offices of institutional research had almost completely bypassed studies of this nature and were concerned only with "direct budgetary and management problems." He noted that his office was spending more time on the mere accumulation of data with too little time "to assimilate its meaning for internal decisions."

Rourke and Brooks (1966) conducted a nationwide study of institutional research agencies in 1964. The results

indicated that the activities of the agencies that participated in the study were primarily academically oriented. However, in 1970, Roney reported that the results of his national survey gave evidence that the majority of the responding institutional research agencies were performing a management service (Roney, 1970). As a result of a national survey of 159 colleges and universities, Larkin (1972) concluded that almost 2 out of 3 of the studies reported by the institutional research agencies were management in orientation.

Several other researchers investigated the functions and emphases of offices of institutional research. It was not clear, however, whether these offices were designed to perform a management service or whether they were devoted to questions of "academic effectiveness."¹

This problem provided the context for the present study. In an environment characterized by scarce resources, operations-management research, as it is usually defined, gives little or no attention to the purposes and values of the institution. An institution must be concerned with ensuring its solvency, but it must also ask what purposes are being served by keeping the institution solvent. It has been suggested that institutional research must integrate its

1. See Rourke and Brooks, 1966, p. 48.

management and academic concepts if it is to have a positive and enduring impact on institutional quality (Dyer, 1966, Fenske, 1970).

In part, this study described the functions and emphases of certain offices of institutional research; and, in part, described the interpretation given to the concept of institutional research by these offices.

The Problem

The concept of institutional research is based on the premise that judgements can be made more credible by systematic fact-gathering and analysis. "No institution can know how to improve itself without knowing in some detail how it has been and is operating" (Dressel, 1971, p. 16). It was the purpose of this study to describe the structures and activities of offices of institutional research in certain institutions of higher education. In particular, this investigation focused on the status of institutional research in Virginia's public senior colleges and universities. Five basic questions were investigated.

First, what were the structures and functions of the offices of institutional research in Virginia's public senior colleges and universities? The primary functions of an institutional research office are often determined by its location in the administrative structure. Moreover, its role in university operations is usually shaped by the

needs and inclinations of the official to whom the institutional research officer is responsible (Rourke and Brooks, 1966). In addition, the scope of the activities undertaken by some institutional research offices may well be a function of the personnel available to the office.

Second, what were the nature and the frequency to which studies were conducted on academic policies, programs, and issues? A diversity of functions are often performed within offices of institutional research in accord with the specific needs of the given institution and the interests and competencies of the personnel involved. Hence, the array of services performed by the institutional research office may change over time. In an environment characterized by pressures from various external agencies, it was deemed appropriate to ask what some institutional research officers were doing with respect to the academic side of the institutional research effort.

Some of the colleges or universities included in this investigation could be considered old, traditional, rather stable institutions, while others could be characterized as emerging institutions striving to define their mission in a setting complicated by scarce resources. Still others could be regarded as basically urban institutions seeking to cope with their concomitant problems. Institutions exist in different environments and some of their constituents probably have different views of institutional

research. The third question investigated in this study was: what were the opinions of selected administrators toward the role and functions of the offices of institutional research?

The fourth question investigated was: How did the perceptions of selected administrators toward the role and functions of institutional research compare with the perceptions of the directors of the offices of institutional research? While the overall coordination and direction of institutional research activities are usually centralized, an office of institutional research cannot operate in isolation (Brumbaugh, 1960). Institutional research offices must often request data and information from other administrators within the institution. The spirit of cooperation exhibited by these administrators may often be a function of their attitudes toward the institutional research office and/or its director. Horizontal, as well as vertical communication is essential for the effective and efficient operation of any organization.

The relationship of an office of institutional research with faculty groups and other agencies and constituents of a college or university can often have an impact on the whole decision-making process. Thus, the final question investigated was: what were the potential problems and points of conflict between the offices of institutional research and other units and agencies of the institution?

PROCEDURES

This investigation was a descriptive study employing the survey technique. It was designed to obtain knowledge of the existing status of institutional research in certain colleges and universities and to determine perceptions of desired conditions. The study did not begin with a well-defined set of hypotheses, but rather was confined to a few specific questions geared toward providing a comprehensive overview of institutional research developments in selected colleges and universities. The nature of institutional research -- "a variegated form of organizational self-study" (Rourke and Brooks, 1966, p. 44) -- made it practical to conduct a study of this type, the assumption being that such a study would provide more insight and understanding than a highly technical theory-based investigation.

In order to maximize the depth of the study and to have direct contact with some institutional research personnel, the study focused on a small segment of the institutions of higher education--the public senior colleges and universities in Virginia.

Parsimony was one of the reasons the Virginian institutions were selected as the subjects of this investigation. More importantly, even though the very concept of institutional research was relatively new, the Virginian institutions recognized the growing need for institutional research. All

of the public senior colleges and universities in Virginia had personnel designated to coordinate institutional research activities.

Since pressures from the external environment often have tremendous impact on the patterns of organization and management in public institutions, this study was limited to colleges and universities in the public sector. Moreover, Rourke and Brooks (1966) asserted that public and private institutions are virtually indistinguishable with respect to purely internal administrative problems.

Population. The population for this investigation consisted of the directors of institutional research and five groups of selected administrators in the fourteen (14) public senior colleges and universities in the state of Virginia. There were fifteen public senior colleges and universities in the Commonwealth, but one institution of this type was a branch of one of the other institutions, and its institutional research activities were coordinated by the parent institution.

The six categories of administrators selected for the study were as follows:

1. Director of Institutional Research
2. President
3. Chief Academic Officer
4. Dean of School of Arts and Sciences

5. Dean of Schools of Business

6. Dean of School of Education

The individual at each institution who held the designated title or a similar one was selected for that particular category. This procedure was not followed, however, in selecting administrators from the schools of arts and sciences since only one-half of the institutions in the study had designated schools of arts and sciences. If an institution did not have a school of arts and sciences, administrative heads of departments and/or divisions of the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities were selected for participation in the study.

The names of the fourteen institutions included in this study are listed below:

Christopher Newport College

George Mason University

Longwood College

Madison College

Mary Washington College

Norfolk State College

Old Dominion University

Radford University

University of Virginia

Virginia Commonwealth University

Virginia Military Institute

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Virginia State College
College of William and Mary

Methodology. Data were collected primarily through questionnaires and interviews in order to answer the specific descriptive questions posed in this study. Other data were obtained from organizational charts and letters sent to the investigator by some administrators.

To determine the structures and functions of the offices of institutional research in Virginia's public senior colleges and universities, a personal interview was conducted with each of the institutional research directors at his respective institution. An interview guide (Appendix A) containing both closed and open-ended questions was used to obtain information on the structures and functions of these offices and to obtain general impressions of their operating practices. In some cases, organizational charts were used to get a picture of the placement of the institutional research office in the total structure of the college or university.

The nature and scope of this study were first introduced to the directors of institutional research at an informal meeting of the directors that was held on May 30,

1975 in Richmond, Virginia. During the first week of June, 1975, a formal letter was sent to each of the fourteen directors for the purposes of soliciting his cooperation in the study and establishing procedures for scheduling the interview. Interview dates were subsequently established by means of telephone with all of the directors.

Since respondents were encouraged to give spontaneous accounts of events and situations, all interviews were tape recorded. Each respondent was told in advance that the interview was to be taped and that the tape was to be erased following the extraction of data needed for this study. All respondents consented to have their interviews taped.

To determine the functions of these offices, the directors were asked to describe both the routine and non-routine activities in which their offices had participated during the last three years. Each director was given a list of job responsibilities that were often assumed by offices of institutional research (Item 3, Interview Guide). Each director rank-ordered the areas listed in terms of the priorities established in his or her office.

Following each interview, the recorded tape was reviewed by the researcher. This was done in an attempt to determine the effectiveness of the procedure, as well as, to gain insights into ways of improving subsequent interviews.

Upon completion of all the interviews, each tape was again reviewed--followed by extensive note taking.

Questions from the interview guide were used to elicit both forced-choice and free response type answers from the respondents. For the most part, the directors were notably forthright in their answers to posed questions. Although, in general, a uniform schedule of questions was utilized, during each interview it was necessary to depart from the interview guide due to variations in organizational structure and institutional research practices.

A summary of the main points related to the structures and functions of the offices of institutional research was compiled. It was assumed that this information was factual, hence no attempt was made to corroborate the data. Organizational charts and "fact books", when available, were used to verify, as well as, clarify some of the data.

The second question raised in this study concerned the nature and the frequency with which studies were conducted on academic policies, programs, and issues. The directors of institutional research served as sources of data relevant to this question. A questionnaire, "Directors' Perceptions of Institutional Research," was developed to collect descriptive information about the directors of institutional research and their offices, some of their perceptions of the role of institutional research at their

respective institutions, and the nature of studies undertaken by the offices.

The directors were asked to place check marks to indicate which ones of the thirty-three listed studies in Part II of the questionnaire their offices had conducted during the past three years, with a beginning date of January 1, 1972. Descriptions of these studies were obtained from the research reported in the literature. The studies listed on the questionnaire were those most frequently referred to in annotated bibliographies of institutional research, reports of papers presented at institutional research conferences, and other compendia that reported institutional research activities.

This questionnaire was sent to the directors along with the letter that requested the scheduling of an interview. All questionnaires were returned to the investigator during the interview.

The information gathered relevant to the nature of studies conducted by the offices of institutional research was based primarily on the recollections of the directors. In a few instances, it was possible to corroborate some of the recollections with evidence exhibited in the various reports obtained from the directors. However even in these limited situations, most of the "studies" were actually statistical reports rather than research investigations. Thus, most of the data obtained in this connection

were treated as opinions rather than as facts.

What were the opinions of selected administrators toward the role and functions of offices of institutional research? To obtain data to provide an answer to this question, a questionnaire was sent to the chief administrative officer, the chief academic officer, and the deans of the schools of arts and sciences, business, and education in each of the fourteen institutions. The questionnaire, "Administrators' Perceptions of Institutional Research," was an expanded form of the questionnaire administered to the directors.

A cover letter accompanied each questionnaire sent to these selected administrators (Appendix A). The letter, mailed during the first week of June, 1975, explained the purposes of the study and solicited the cooperation of the administrators. A stamped, addressed, return envelop was also provided. A follow-up personal letter was sent as a reminder to those who had not responded to the initial request after approximately four weeks (see Appendix A). The responses obtained to this third descriptive question were treated as opinions.

The fourth descriptive question concerned comparing the perceptions of the role of institutional research of selected administrators with the perceptions of the directors of the offices of institutional research. Data were collected from the two questionnaires that were administered

to the directors of institutional research and the five selected administrative groups.

Items #2 - #5 on the questionnaire sent to these administrators were identical to Items #1 - #4 on the directors' questionnaire. The items were designed to elicit the respondent's perceptions of institutional research at his particular college or university. Each administrator was asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 the extent to which he thought the office of institutional research on his campus should be involved in each of thirty-three listed studies. These opinions may serve as indicators of the general future direction of institutional research activities in Virginia's public senior colleges and universities.

The final question posed in this investigation was: what were the potential problems and points of conflict between the offices of institutional research and other units and agencies of the institution? In seeking an answer to this question, data were obtained primarily from the directors of institutional research. During the interview, directors were asked to discuss some of the chief obstacles to optimum development of the institutional research program on their campuses. In addition, the directors were asked to assess the perceptions and attitudes of certain groups, such as the faculty and the

administrative staff, toward the role and functions of institutional research on their campuses.

Such descriptors as bias, subjective, fixed attitudes, and personal loyalty often characterize some interview findings. Since the directors in general were enthusiastic about their institutional research activities, allowances were made for subjectivity. Even allowing for such subjectivity, however, the data obtained represented little more than perceptions. Thus additional evidence was needed.

One way to determine potential problems and points of conflict between two agencies is to compare the agencies' perceptions and goals relative to the same area. Thus, the investigator compared responses to selected items on the two questionnaires in order to gain a general impression of potential problems and points of conflict between the institutional research office and other units of the institution. While such comparisons do not provide precise data, they suggest lines of inquiry which otherwise might not have been exposed.

Summary

Pressures for accountability and demands from state and federal agencies have made it necessary for offices

of institutional research to direct much more attention to data collection in order to meet such external demands. It was within this setting that "A Descriptive Study of Offices of Institutional Research in Virginia's Public Senior Colleges and Universities" was undertaken.

The study investigated the existing status of institutional research and the perceptions of selected administrators and directors toward the role and functions of institutional research in fourteen institutions of higher education. While the study did not begin with a set of well-specified hypotheses, five basic questions served as the focal point around which the study was organized. What were the structures and functions of the offices of institutional research? What were the nature and the frequency of studies that were conducted on academic policies, programs, and issues? How did the opinions of selected administrators compare with the perceptions of the directors of institutional research? What were the potential problems and points of conflict between the offices of institutional research and other units and agencies of the institution?

The population of the study consisted of the director of institutional research, the chief administrative officer, the chief academic officer, and the deans of the schools of arts and sciences, business, and education from

each of the fourteen colleges and universities.

Data were collected primarily by means of two questionnaires and interviews with the directors. Except for basic descriptive data, most of the data collected were judgemental in nature. Thus, many of the findings may reflect bias, subjectivity, and fixed attitudes. The directors for the most part were very enthusiastic about their institutional research programs, and although many of them were relatively new to the institutional research endeavor, they had already formed rather fixed conceptions of what institutional research was all about. Allowances must be made for such personal views and the resulting subjectivity.

It was not expected that the findings would furnish precise, generalizable data concerning the various aspects of institutional research in the Virginia colleges and universities. It was expected, however, that the research would provide a comprehensive overview of institutional research activities in Virginia's public senior colleges and universities and indicate major trends and developments.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

Introduction

The institutional research officer was a relatively new addition to the formal organizational charts of institutions of higher education. Although Cowley (1960) traced the concept of institutional research back to the founding of Yale University in 1701, it was not until the late 1950's that the term "institutional research" came into general usage in higher education (Saupe and Montgomery, 1970). By 1970, however, Tetlow (1970) noted that there were hundreds of administrative staff offices in colleges and universities in the United States with the words "institutional research" in their job title and/or job description. Thus by the time of this study, institutional research was being viewed by many colleges and universities as a continuing process requiring the full energies of at least one or more specialized staff persons.

It was argued that the term institutional research was misleading because of the "easy confusion between it and on-going programs of academic research within the institution," (Miller, 1967, p. 5). In an attempt at

clarification, Dressel and Pratt (1971) asserted that institutional research differed from general research in higher education because it focused on studies which "are at least in part specific to the problems of a specific institution or a system of higher education in a state or region" (p. 11).

Actually, there was considerable disagreement in higher education as to what institutional research really was. Even Dressel (1971) admitted that some of his colleagues did not agree on a precise definition of institutional research. Part of this difficulty was attributed to differing views of institutional research. Often one's view of institutional research was directly related to how institutional research came into being at a given institution. Thus the nature and scope of institutional research activities varied from campus to campus, depending on whether investigations focused on students, faculty, operating costs, or space utilization.

It was assumed that the set of activities engaged in by an office of institutional research was consistent with its view of institutional research. Hence, in reviewing the literature, two questions seemed particularly relevant. First, what is institutional research? Second, what were the major areas of emphasis in institutional research?

What Is Institutional Research?

In spite of the substantial growth of formalized institutional research, there was no consensus on a definition of institutional research. A. J. Brumbaugh (1960) called it "research designed to improve institutions of higher learning," while Rourke and Brooks (1966, p. 44) suggested that institutional research was "a variegated form of organizational self-study designed to help colleges and universities gather an expanding range of information about their own internal operations and the effectiveness with which they are using their resources."

It was often pointed out that institutional research was as diverse as the institutions it was supposed to serve. Dyer (1966) added that institutional research was probably also as diverse as the institutional researchers who served it.

The range of definitions in the literature spanned the continuum from purely administrative to purely academic emphases. Often cited was John Dale Russell's view of institutional research as an agency facilitating "studies of operational problems" (Russell, 1965, p. 284).

At the opposite end of the continuum, was the view of Sanford Nevitt who expressed a need for a research agency to ensure that "intensive, theoretically-oriented, long term studies of students and intensive, probably

also long-term studies of the inner workings of educational institutions" (Nevitt, 1962, p. 1013) be conducted using the scientific approach.

Dyer (1966) advanced the thought that if institutional research were to be viable and effective, some method had to be found for integrating these two views. He noted that institutional researchers should both look for "better ways to balance budgets and keep students and faculties happy" (p. 456).

One institutional researcher predicted that institutional research was evolving into a third force in higher education - "into an interface role in the structure of higher education" (Perry, 1972, p.6). He viewed institutional research as the "locus of activity" which would enable the academic and non-academically oriented person to better understand each other. Suslow (1972) elaborated further on this third force role of institutional research. He viewed institutional research as serving a mediator role between the force of the educators whose "basic interests, goals, motivations and philosophies differ from the force of the management scientists, systems analysts, and similar technologies" (p. 16). Suslow (1972) argued that institutional research was neither purely management oriented nor purely academically oriented but was a special kind of educational research in colleges

and universities focused on the institution, and its products were largely directed toward academic planning and administrative activities" (p. 17).

The National Laboratory for Higher Education (1971) described contemporary institutional research as follows:

Institutional research is the means by which a college or university searches for the truth about itself; what it is accomplishing and why; what its resources are now and how effectively they are being used; what potential resources are now being tapped; what changes should be made in policies, procedures, and programs; and what methods for making these necessary are feasible. For greater simplicity, institutional research provides information for assessing where the institution is, where it is going, and how, if necessary, its direction might be altered. Institutional researchers conduct applied research, interpret research results, and prepare research reports designed to aid decision-makers (p. 10).

Suslow (1972) countered, however, that institutional research was neither applied nor pure research; that it inevitably "will involve a lot of both" (p. 17).

In analyzing the results of his interviews with sixteen "recognized institutional research leaders," Tetlow (1974) found it interesting that these persons were inclined to include a description of an "operational philosophy" in the scope of their definitions of institutional research (p. 8).

Stickler (1959), one of the early pioneers in the field of institutional research offered the following:

Institutional research refers to research which is directed toward providing data useful or necessary in the making of intelligent administrative decisions and/or for the successful maintenance,

operation, and/or improvement of a given institution of higher education. It includes the collection and analysis of data used in appraising the environment or "setting" in which the institution operates, in preparing the budget, in planning new buildings, in determining faculty loads, in admitting students, in individualizing instruction, in planning the educational program and the like. It is needed to facilitate efficient operation, but it is also needed to promote qualitative improvement. (p. 542)

Dressel (1966) summarized institutional research thusly:

Institutional research involves the collection of data or the making of studies useful or necessary in (a) understanding and interpreting the institution; (b) making intelligent decisions about current operations or plans for the future; (c) improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the institution. (p. 8)

To answer their own query concerning institutional research, Saupe and Montgomery (1970), using Dressel's definition as background, stated that "institutional research consists of data collection, analyses, reporting, and related staff work designed to facilitate operations and decision-making within institutions of higher education" (p. 3).

While Grout (1964) referred to institutional research as a "tool in the administrator's tool kit" (p. 34), John Stecklein (1970) of the University of Minnesota opined that a broad institutional research program served not only administrators, but faculty, students, and coordinating boards and other unifying agencies as well. Stecklein (1970) indicated that institutional research

1. assisted faculty members:

- a. to learn by controlled experimentation the potentialities, outcomes, or limitations of their instruction.
- b. to obtain a better understanding of the purpose of a course or curriculum.
- c. to determine a basis for comparative judgments concerning instruction and curriculum building.
- d. to obtain a better understanding of admissions practices, examinations, procedures, grading practices, and work loads.
- e. to obtain a better understanding of the role of the faculty member in the administration of the college or university, e.g. of the pressures and forces causing certain administrative problems and/or actions, or of the desirability of a faculty voice in administrative policy making.
- f. to develop a better understanding of the factors that influence costs of instruction and other functions of an institution of higher education.
- g. to obtain an understanding of the way in which curricular decisions can affect such things as space utilization, building costs, and various routine operations of an institution.

2. assisted the administration:

- a. to serve most of the purposes listed above.
- b. to identify and analyze factors that influence costs of efficiency of operation.
- c. to obtain overall pictures of the characteristics of the undergraduate and graduate student body, of the faculty, and of the curriculum.
- d. to provide continuous up-to-date data on institutional characteristics such as size, rank of staff, available space, number of research contracts, amount of staff effort expended upon research, public and professional services, etc.
- e. to bring to the attention of the administrators trends taking place in any of the characteristics mentioned above.
- f. to provide data and information useful in obtaining financial support.
- g. to provide data useful in explaining the mission and achievements of the institution. (p. 254).

According to Stecklein (1970), an institutional research program could serve students by providing assistance to student organizations in the form of advisory help and by making surveys or analyses relating to problems of concern to them. He added further that the role of institutional research relative to coordinating agencies and other external groups was to organize data collection procedures and definitions in order to accurately represent the institution to such agencies.

This comprehensive description of institutional research placed emphasis on both the management and academic concerns of an institution. Tetlow (1974) noted that seventy-five per cent (twelve) of the respondents in his study favored an operating philosophy of institutional research that encompassed both of these concerns. In addition, the same respondents indicated that they had adopted a definition of institutional research sufficiently broad that there had been no need to change it within the past ten years. However, the respondents agreed unanimously that the primary or sole emphasis was focused on central administrative issues and that instructionally related issues were receiving scant attention "in most institutions in 1970" (p. 41).

Although Miller (1967) agreed that institutional research should focus on both administrative and academic issues, he asserted that the term "institutional research" was misleading because of the "easy confusion

between it and on-going programs of academic research within the institution" (p. 6). He thought the term "management research" or "analytical studies" was more descriptive of this field of endeavor. Regardless of the name used to describe this enterprise, Tetlow (1974) concluded that the consensus of the sixteen "recognized institutional research leaders" in his study would include the following elements in a definition of institutional research:

- consists of data collection, analysis, and reporting
- is designed to provide useful factual information for the decision-making process
- is aimed at improving the understanding, planning, and operation of higher education (p. 142).

Areas of Emphasis in Institutional Research

Several investigators organized institutional research activities into specific categories. Brumbaugh (1960) suggested eight categories into which institutional research studies could be classified: goals, students, faculty, curriculum, facilities, administration, finance, and public relations.

Peterson (1971) proposed the following model for categorizing institutional research activities:

Policy Research

Long range studies of organizational goal achievement and resource utilization
Comparative research for other higher education institutions

Studies of overall structure and functioning of the institution
 Research on environmental conditions affecting the institution
 Forecasting alternative futures and their impact on the institution

Operating Research

Devising forecasting and simulation models of institutional and environmental dynamics
 Evaluating alternative program and resource strategies and specific decisions

Evaluation Research

Assessment of program input, process, and output. Variables overtime
 Measures of goal achievement and unintended effects of programs
 Cost and productivity measurements

Descriptive Research

Analysis and reports of current operations
 (p. 38)

Larkin (1972) asserted that a meaningful way to categorize institutional research activities was to classify the studies according to the way they were used, either primarily to support administrative decision-making or to improve the academic program. He delineated each of these areas to include variations of the categories presented by Peterson (1971). Larkin (1972) suggested the following typology:

Policy Studies

1. Institutional goal-setting
2. Inter-institutional comparison and/or cooperation
3. Organizational structure and/or social functioning
4. Analysis of economics and/or social conditions affecting the institution
5. Institutional long range plan
6. Management by objectives

Operational Relationships

1. Devising simulation models of institutional dynamics
2. Planning near term alternatives for program development or resources allocation

3. Strategies to increase income or effective funds utilization
4. Enrollment projections, or enrollment sources
5. Cost-effectiveness studies
6. Space utilization and/or needs

Outcomes of Evaluation Studies

1. Academic accreditation or multi-program mission achievement
2. Program or curriculum evaluation (individual curricula)
3. Student success or failure (academic achievement)
4. Teaching effectiveness
5. Student follow-up studies
6. Effectiveness of media, materials, or methods

Descriptive Studies

1. Information supporting the budgeting process
2. Student characteristics profiles
3. Faculty characteristics, faculty load, student-teacher ratio, or class size studies
4. Salary/fringe benefit studies
5. Descriptions of applications, attrition, graduations, or the equivalent
6. Opinion samplings (p. 58).

Gunnell (1973) proposed classifying Larkin's categories into two broad areas: (1) institutional operations (operationally related models and descriptive studies) and (2) program planning and/or modification (policy and planning studies and evaluation studies).

One of the first studies of institutional research activities was undertaken by Sprague (1959) for the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. The 209 Western colleges and universities that participated in the survey described the studies that they were conducting. Based on the nature of the studies, Sprague (1959) defined ten categories. He totaled the studies, eliminated some

(0.2 per cent) considered inappropriate, and then reported the percentage of acceptable studies falling in each category: students (24 per cent), faculty (15.7 per cent), curriculum (15.5 per cent), enrollment (8.3 per cent), physical plant (11.4 per cent), administration and organization (7.8 per cent), admissions policy (5.3 per cent), teaching models (6.5 per cent), finance (4.5 per cent), and relations with outside agencies or other institutions (0.8 per cent).

Stickler (1959) conducted a similar investigation using the member institutions of both the American Association of Land-Grant Colleges and State Universities and the State Universities Association. Stickler (1959) catalogued the studies by institution and listed all topics that were reported. He found that the problems studied by these institutions tended to focus on immediate, specific topics rather than on long range educational planning. The studies dealt with problems of the individual college or university rather than with groups of institutions on state, regional, or national levels.

Few of the studies reported in either of these investigations were conducted by persons who considered themselves institutional researchers. Sprague (1959) reported that usually a president, vice president, or dean had the responsibility for research activities. Many of the authors of the studies listed by Stickler (1959) were

described as budget officers, registrars, personnel directors, and even graduate students.

Rourke and Brooks (1966) noted that prior to 1955 there were only ten institutions of higher education in the United States with formal offices or bureaus of institutional research. By the time they conducted their own study of institutional research activities in 1964, however, they concluded that there were at least 115 such agencies charged with the responsibility of institutional research.

Rourke and Brooks (1966) sent questionnaires to 361 four-year state supported colleges and universities, to a sample of 36 nonstate public institutions and 36 private colleges - receiving almost an 80 per cent response. In addition, they conducted interviews at 33 colleges and universities and central governing boards in 16 states. Each institutional research agency in the colleges and universities was asked to describe its primary work orientation by ranking several areas: financial studies, faculty studies, and student studies. Of the 124 agencies responding to the questions, 40 per cent indicated students were of major importance of their office, while 24 per cent listed faculty studies as their primary concern. Rourke and Brooks (1966) concluded that the work of institutional research agencies in 1964 was primarily concerned with academic problems. They noted that 29 per cent of

all the responding agencies indicated that the study of housekeeping (studies of finance and studies of physical planning) was their chief concern, while almost two-thirds of the agencies were primarily academically oriented.

When Roney (1970) conducted a national survey of offices of institutional research regarding the relative emphasis the offices placed on academic and management projects, he observed that in a majority of the institutions surveyed a large percentage of the institutional research studies undertaken were management oriented. He noted, however, that, in general, small, undergraduate institutions placed greater emphasis on academic problems.

Roney (1970) sent questionnaires to all colleges and universities in this country which had personnel who held active membership in the Association for Institutional Research. His sample consisted of the directors of institutional research and selected administrators at each of 220 institutions. The questionnaires completed by the directors listed 24 types of research projects; one-half of these were judged in advance as primarily academic types while the other half of the projects were essentially management types. The types of studies most often undertaken by offices of institutional research that participated in this study were: (1) enrollment projections, (2) coordination and completion of questionnaires, (3) faculty loads, (4) space utilization, (5) studies at the request

of faculty groups, and (6) the development of data collection systems.

In addition to Roney, several other investigators of institutional research activities conducted studies of institutional research utilizing the members of the Association for Institutional Research as the population. The Association, a professional organization of institutional researchers, was legally incorporated in 1965 as an outgrowth of a series of annual conferences on institutional research (Saupe, 1967). The constitution of the Association defined a full member as a person actively engaged in institutional research, and an associate member as one interested in the methodology and the results of institutional research but who was not actively engaged in such research (Tincher, 1970).

Stecklein (1966) made an analysis of the backgrounds and characteristics of the 382 members of the Association of Institutional Research (AIR). Using the AIR Charter Membership Application Form as the source for his data, Stecklein (1966) reported that more than fifty per cent of the members indicated the study of students as one of the primary areas of responsibility associated with their existing positions.

In 1970 a similar study of the active members of the Association for Institutional Research was conducted (Tincher, 1970). Questionnaires were distributed to 796

such persons and were returned by 696--a response rate of 84 per cent. While Stecklein (1966) used an open ended question to elicit responses regarding the duties and responsibilities of the members, Tincher (1970) asked members to rank order their primary areas of emphasis on a pre-selected list. "Planning and Coordination" was ranked as number one choice, followed by "Studies of Students" and "Faculty Studies." Curriculum studies and studies of teaching received the least emphasis.

In the spring of 1973 Morstain and Smart (1974) sought to determine the degree to which institutional research priorities had shifted since the period of Tincher's investigation. They distributed a questionnaire to the 1048 active members of the Association for Institutional Research. Usable questionnaires were returned by 706 (67 per cent) of the respondents. Members were asked to rank-order eight areas of job responsibilities on both an actual and a preferred basis. Planning and coordination activities were ranked highest.

Table 1 shows a comparison of these three studies. It gives a general indication of how institutional research emphases have shifted during the past few years. Caution must be exercised in interpreting the table, however, since the methodologies of the three studies were not the same.

TABLE I

Actual Duties and Responsibilities as Ranked by AIR Members

	1966 Survey ¹	1970 Survey ²	1973 Survey ³
Studies of Students	1	2	3
Planning & Coordination	2	1	1
Space Utilization	3	7	8
Faculty Studies	4	3	5
Curriculum	5	8	7
Budget & Finances	6	4	2
Organizational Studies	7	5	4
Data Systems & Computers	8	6	6
Teaching	9	9	**

1. Stecklein

2. Tincher

3. Based on data reported by Morstain and Smart

** This category was not included in the 1973 survey

Planning and coordination received high emphasis in all the studies - being ranked the highest in both the 1970 and 1973 surveys. On the other hand, studies of teaching ranked the lowest in 1966 and 1970 and was dropped as a category in 1973. While there was a decreased emphasis noted for space utilization and

curriculum studies, organizational studies and budget and finances received an increased emphasis. Studies of students apparently declined in emphasis, however, data systems and computers seemed to gain in emphasis.

In analyzing their 1973 survey, Morstain and Smart (1974) reported that respondents in private, four-year colleges and universities placed greater emphasis on activities in the areas of planning-coordination and budget-finances. These institutions placed relatively less emphasis on organizational studies. Institutional research personnel in public, four-year colleges tended to devote more time to studies of faculty, space utilization, and data systems. This group spent a relatively smaller percentage of their time on planning-coordination activities, studies of students, and curriculum studies (Morstain and Smart, 1974).

To prepare for a session at the 1970 Association for Institutional Research Forum, Charles I. Brown conducted a study entitled, "Some Characteristics of Institutional Researchers at Predominantly Black Institutions." Brown (1970) sent a questionnaire based on the form used in Tincher's study to ninety predominantly black senior colleges and universities. The questionnaire was returned by sixty-eight per cent of the sample; twenty-nine (48 per cent) reported having personnel actively

engaged in institutional research. The respondents were asked to rank order eleven institutional research activities that commanded the greater portion of their time. The activities listed were: budget and finances, collecting information to assist day-to-day decision making, conducting studies conceived and designed by institutional research personnel, conducting studies for long-range planning and decision making, curriculum studies, filling out HEGIS and other forms, planning/coordination/development, space utilization, and student studies (Brown, 1970). An analysis of the findings indicated that black public senior colleges and universities spent the greatest amount of their time on space utilization activities. Budget-finances and conducting studies for long-range planning and decision making also received high rankings, while student studies commanded the least portion of their time. Their private counterparts put the greatest portion of their time on data systems and computers, budget and finances, and space utilization activities. Planning/coordination/development and collecting information to assist day-to-day decision making received the lowest rankings.

It is worth noting that more than ninety-one per cent of the private colleges that participated in Brown's survey had an enrollment of 2100 or less.

During the Spring of 1972 Larkin (1972) conducted a study on institutional research priorities for the National Laboratory for Higher Education. A national sampling of 220 public colleges and universities yielded a response rate of seventy-two per cent.

His findings indicated that long-range planning was "far and away the most frequent type of policy study reported" (Larkin, 1972, p. 13). Further, both two-year colleges and four-year colleges and universities placed highest priority on long-range planning. The most frequent type of operational study reported by the participants was enrollment projections--closely followed by studies of space utilization or needs.

Among the outcomes or evaluation studies, curriculum evaluation was most frequently mentioned by the respondents. In fact, ninety-five per cent of the senior institutions reported involvement with this type of study. Student achievement (59 per cent) and student follow-up studies (59 per cent) came next in order. The most frequently mentioned descriptive studies were faculty studies (71 per cent) and student profiles (70 per cent). It must be noted that faculty studies were much more frequent at senior institutions (95 per cent) than at the two-year institutions (59 per cent) (Larkin, 1972).

Comparing the four categories relative to percentage distribution of studies, descriptive studies, operational studies, evaluation studies, and policy studies claimed the attention of the participating institutional researchers, in that order. Taken together, descriptive and operational studies accounted for sixty-three per cent of the studies undertaken. In other words, nearly two out of three studies were concerned with institutional operations rather than with planning level studies (Larkin, 1972). These data seem to be contradictory to the trend indicated in Table I. Whether a contradiction exists depends upon the interpretation of the data. Such an interpretation must be exercised with extreme caution due to the variations in methodologies.

Summary

A review of the literature indicated a range of definitions in the evolving field of institutional research, as well as, varying patterns of research emphasis.

Differences in the definition of institutional research accounted for basic differences in the view of institutional research. There were two major points of view regarding the function of institutional research. Some argued that institutional research ought to be concerned with operational problems. In this view, institutional researchers

were expected to deal primarily with such administrative or housekeeping problems as budgetary requests and space utilization. Others advanced the thought that institutional research ought to be essentially academic in orientation, with attention being devoted to questions of academic effectiveness. Those that supported this view felt that institutional researchers ought to be concerned with the purposes and values of an institution, and that they should not be involved in day-to-day operations.

Several authors asserted that institutional researchers ought not be involved exclusively in either administrative or academic activities, but should be concerned with both efficiency and effectiveness.

During the past fifteen years, several researchers investigated the activities in which various institutional research agencies engaged. Two of the first studies were conducted by Sprague (1959) and Stickler (1959). Few of the studies reported in either of these investigations, however, were conducted by persons who considered themselves institutional researchers. Sprague (1959) reported that usually a president, vice president, or dean had the responsibility for research activities. Many of the authors of the studies listed by Stickler (1969) are described as

budget officers, registrars, personnel directors, and even graduate students.

A landmark national survey of institutional research activities in four-year colleges was conducted by Rourke and Brooks in 1966. They attributed the growth of institutional research to the modernization of managerial practices in higher education. Rourke and Brooks concluded that the work of institutional research agencies in 1964 was primarily oriented toward academic problems.

Six years later, as a result of another national survey, Roney (1970) reported in his doctoral dissertation that the majority of the studies undertaken by institutional research agencies was management oriented.

Several researchers used the members of the Association for Institutional Research as the subjects of their studies (Tincher, 1970; Roney, 1970; Morstain and Smart, 1974). While there were variations in the methodologies used in these studies, they served to indicate the areas of emphasis in institutional research. The trend was away from the academic emphasis found by Rourke and Brooks (1966). Rather, institutional researchers were involved primarily in operations-management types of activities.

The results from another national survey were supportive of this trend (Larkin, 1972). The data indicated that the majority of institutional research activities were

management oriented versus instructionally oriented.

Although the nature and scope of institutional research activities eluded precise definition, it was pointed out often that a given institution ought to tailor its definition and research activities to suit the needs of the college or university, and the philosophy of its chief executive.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF DATA

Introduction and Response Rate

As previously stated, this study focused on the offices of institutional research in Virginia's public senior colleges and universities. It investigated five descriptive questions: (1) what were the structures and functions of these offices; (2) what were the nature and the frequency to which studies were conducted on academic policies, programs, and issues; (3) how did the opinions of selected administrators toward the role and functions of institutional research compare with the perceptions of the directors of institutional research; and (5) what were the potential problems and points of conflict between the offices of institutional research and other units and agencies of the institution? Two methods were used to obtain data and information relevant to this research. Interviews were conducted with each of the fourteen institutional research directors on their respective campuses. In addition, each director was mailed a two-part questionnaire, which was returned at the time of the interview; thus there was a one hundred

per cent return on this questionnaire. A similar questionnaire, "Administrators' Perceptions of Institutional Research," was sent to five groups of selected administrators in these colleges and universities. Returns were received from fifty-three of the sixty-three administrators--indicating an eighty-four per cent response rate. In approximately eight per cent of these returns, responses were not given for one or more of the items on the questionnaire, resulting in differences in the base figures used in the tabular presentations in the forthcoming sections.

Since there was a one hundred per cent return rate on the directors' questionnaire, Table II and Table III show the distribution of returns of the administrators' questionnaire only. At least eighty per cent of the selected administrators in ten of the colleges and universities returned their questionnaire. Not less than fifty per cent of the administrators in the other four institutions returned their questionnaires.

TABLE II

Response Rate of Administrators By Institutional Size

Enrollment	Number In Group	Number Responding	Number Responding
Small (Under 3,000)	16	13	81.3
Medium (3,000 - 10,000)	27	23	85.2
Large (Over 10,000)	20	17	85.0
TOTALS	63	53	84.1

TABLE III
Response Rate By Administrative Categories

ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP	Number In Group	Number Responding	Per Cent Responding
Presidents	14	11	78.6
Chief Academic Officers	13	12	92.3
Deans			
Schools of Arts & Sciences	14	13	92.9
Schools of Business	10	6	60.0
Schools of Education	12	11	91.7
TOTALS	63	53	84.1

For the purposes of this research, institutions included in this study were classified as small, medium-size, or large according to whether their enrollments were less than 3,000, between 3,000 and 10,000 and over 10,000 respectively. Each of the three presidents who did not respond to his questionnaire represented one of these enrollment classes. Each president wrote a letter to the writer stating that the office of institutional research handled all questionnaires and thus deemed it inappropriate to respond to the questionnaire associated with this investigation. There was concern that the low percentage of responding deans of the schools of business would give a distorted picture of the perception of institutional research in the institutions being surveyed. However, the distribution of the responding deans was about the same as the distribution of the schools of business

among the institutions of different size. Thus, it was assumed that the administrators returning the questionnaire represented a typical cross section of the five administrative groups in institutions of various sizes.

The data, information, and impressions gleaned from the questionnaire and interviews are presented in the remainder of this chapter. Each of the five major sections corresponds to one of the five descriptive questions posed at the outset of this investigation.

Structure and Functions

Organized institutional research was added only recently as an activity in the public institutions of higher education in Virginia. Only since 1966 has the state formally supported such offices in its fifteen public senior colleges and universities. However, since that time all of these institutions have designated personnel to conduct or coordinate institutional research activities, with over sixty per cent of the offices being established between 1970 and 1974. This growth in the number of institutional research offices in the past few years was attributed primarily to increased demands for the reporting of data to various external agencies. In particular, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (hereafter referred to as the State Council), in its role as the Commonwealth's coordinating board, increasingly required compilations

of statistical data and analyses from the colleges and universities. Several directors indicated that an office of institutional research was established on their campuses following a request from the State Council for an institutional representative to serve as a liason agent.

Other specific reasons for establishing an agency for institutional research varied from campus to campus. Some of the first offices to be established were based on recommendations from the Southern Association of Colleges and Universities, which was pressing for the establishment of such offices to serve as foci for the responsibility of self-evaluation as a continuous function. Some directors attributed the establishment of the institutional research office on their campuses to recognition on the part of the chief administrators of the need for more objective data in decision-making. This recognition resulted partly from the introduction of computers into various university activities. Increasing quantities of raw data were available, but these data were utilized infrequently in internal decision-making. In some cases this recognition was translated into administrative re-organization resulting in the establishment of a formal institutional research agency. One director observed that the rapid increase in student enrollment (enrollment tripled in the last five years) and the concurrent lack of data and statistics on the student body

was the contributing factor that led to the establishment of an office of institutional research on his campus as a separate administrative function.

Several factors influenced the organizational structures and the major foci of the offices of institutional research surveyed in this study. Among them were: size of the institution; the needs and interests of the official to whom the institutional research office was responsible; the interests and philosophies of the person charged with institutional research; and the climate in which these institutions operated. As might be anticipated, the existence of a formally organized institutional research agency was related to the size of the institution. Table IV shows the status of the chief administrative official charged with the institutional research function in institutions of varying size and type.

TABLE IV

Status of Chief Administrative Official Charged With The
Institutional Research Function

Category	No. Full-Time Officials	No. Part-Time Officials	Totals
ENROLLMENT			
Under 3,000		4	4
3,000 - 10,000	6		6
Over 10,000	4		4
Totals	10	4	14
HIGHEST DEGREE OFFERED			
Baccalaureate		3	3
Masters	5	1	6
Doctorate	5		5
Totals	10	4	14

In ten of the fourteen institutions, formalized institutional research operations were centralized under a full-time administrative official who was designated "director". Three of the smallest colleges had no formal organization. In these institutions no central program of institutional research existed. In each instance, however, external reporting requirements were coordinated by an official who held another position. The executive officer at one of these colleges observed that his staff was "too small to permit a separate office of this nature." He added, however, that as the needs arose, research was conducted by an appropriate faculty or staff member as an additional duty or by a committee appointed for a specific purpose. In one college formalized institutional research activities were coordinated by an official who held part-time status in institutional research. This official was also the director of computer services. The actual titles of the officials charged with the institutional research responsibilities for their colleges/universities are indicated in Table V.

TABLE V

Titles Held By Institutional Research Officials

Title	Number of Officials
Director of Institutional Research	5
Director of Institutional Analysis	2
Director of Institutional Studies	2
Director of Institutional Research and Planning	1
Director of Computer Services and Institutional Studies	1
Vice President and Director of Institutional Studies	1
Administrative Assistant to President	1
Registrar	1

The size of the professional staff in the institutional research agencies was also related to the size of the institution. Table VI shows the number of professional staff members in institutions of varying size.

TABLE VI
Size of Professional Staff in
Institutional Research Agencies

Enrollment	Number of Professional Employees					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
Under 3,000	4					4
3,000-10,000	3	3				6
Over 10,000		1	1		2	4
Totals	7	4	1		2	14

NOTE: Each entry represents the number of agencies in that given category.

In all of the small institutions, the only individual assigned to institutional research was the official designated to perform or coordinate institutional research activities. However, in the medium size institutions fifty per cent of the institutional research agencies employed one professional staff member in addition to the director of institutional research. On the other hand, all of the large institutions had more than one person assigned to institutional research, with 50 per cent (2) of the agencies consisting of a professional staff of five. All of the

professional staff in institutional research agencies located in institutions with an enrollment over 3,000 were assigned to the agencies on a full-time basis.

Institutional research was considered a staff function at all of the institutions. The offices of institutional research were designed primarily all of the institutional research officials reported to the president or one of the vice-presidents. Table VII shows the college or university administrative officer to whom the director of institutional research was responsible.

TABLE VII

Official To Whom Director of Institutional Research Reported

<u>College or University Official</u>	<u>Number of Directors</u>
President	5 (35.7%)
Academic Vice President	3 (21.4%)
Executive Vice President	2 (14.3%)
Vice President for Planning	2 (14.3%)
Director of Administration	1 (7.1%)
Dean of Faculty	1 (7.1%)

NOTE: Percentages represent per cents of the total.

In general, the purposes and functions of the offices of institutional research were not well-defined; instead the major functions of the offices evolved as the needs of the college or university expanded and changed. Central administration's responses to these needs were essential in shaping the mission of institutional research.

One director recalled that under a former president, the director participated primarily in research based on program evaluations. However, the current president was primarily management-oriented. The director noted that he stopped doing evaluative research on programs and other activities of this nature and started doing managerial research in order to supply answers for administrative decisions. When the State Council's reporting requirements became so vast that some one was needed to coordinate the reports at the college, the president decided that such coordination was to be a function of institutional research. At the time of this study this director was spending such a large proportion of his time reporting to outside agencies that he characterized himself as the "official reporting statistician" for the college.

At an institution which had experienced considerable growth in the last few years, the director of institutional research was charged with the primary responsibility for developing a management information system. The administra-

tion recognized the need for such a system to facilitate the coordination of internal operations, as well as, to respond to the State Council's attempts to improve planning mechanisms in the state as a whole.

The director at one of the medium size institutions reported that he was given a one page sheet describing the responsibilities of the office of institutional research. He noted, however, that he soon discovered the "real" duties that were to be performed. In addition to coordinating reports to outside agencies, this director had the full responsibility for preparing the college's budget exhibit to the State Council. At least two other directors, both in small colleges, were also responsible for preparing the budget exhibit. The budget exhibit was based on enrollment projections. Predicting student enrollments was a task of all the institutional research agencies, however, it seemed that most of them were required only to provide data to other offices charged with the preparation of the budget.

At one of the large urban institutions the directors said that his president expected the office of institutional research to be a "fire-fighting office." The office was expected to handle almost any kind of institutional problem--be it space assignments or questions related to parking. He remarked that his office did very

little in terms of what "most people in the country would call institutional research," that is, "what is the university as a totality." The chief executive officer at this institutional considered the office an "arm of the president," according to the director.

Although in most of Virginia's public senior institutions there was a tendency toward the centralization of institutional research functions, several other agencies shared the responsibility for conducting research into the institutions' operations. The offices of institutional research often participated in the research by supplying requested data and information or by coordinating the studies for such agencies as the registrar's office, the business office, the admissions office, and the development office. At one large institution, the registrar's office reported to the director of the office of institutional research. This arrangement seemed particularly advantageous at this institution since the tremendous quantity of student data that were generated required the close cooperation of both offices. Thus, the staff from both agencies was involved jointly in planning, conducting, and interpreting certain research projects. Another example of cooperative effort in conducting certain studies was provided by one director who described how his president initiated a given study, the counseling center designed it, the registrar obtained

the sample, and the office of institutional research ran the statistical tests and analyzed the data generated by the study.

Another factor which influenced the functions and operations of an office of institutional research was the incumbent in the position. One director, who referred to himself as a "hard-rock numberman," described his office as being primarily involved in space inventories, space guide applications, capital outlays, and enrollment projections. He deliberately selected all of his staff members from business and industry because "from my point of view, higher education desperately needs and has needed for a long time what I call the hard rock look from the business and industry point of view, the MIS (management information system) approach."

A director who had had considerable experience in institutional research, reported that he selected staff persons on the basis of their demonstrated ability to publish. Although publishing was not a function of the office, the director was of the opinion that offices of institutional research should publish some of its studies. Studies of models and descriptive studies of procedures for developing certain types of information were given as examples of publishable studies.

When the director at one of the large institutions assumed his position, the office of institutional research was charged to perform two major functions: (1) to serve the administration and (2) to serve as a liason agency for external reporting. However, the director was instrumental in expanding the functions of the office such that at the time of this study the staff of the institutional research office devoted a considerable portion of its efforts assisting departments and schools with internal studies or problems. In addition, the office served a planning function; it developed position papers and amassed data to assist other agencies of the institution with their planning efforts.

Demands for public accountability significantly impinged upon the functions of the offices of institutional research in Virginia's public senior colleges and universities. Data presented in Table VIII show that ten of the fourteen directors interviewed indicated that preparing reports to external agencies was the major job responsibility of their offices. The State Council, in particular, required constant compilations of statistical data and analyses related to institutional efficiencies. The quantity of requests from State Council was so massive that one director alleged that institutional research in the state of Virginia was "molded by State Council." Another director referred to himself as the "house statistician" for the State Council.

TABLE VIII

Major Job Responsibilities of Offices of Institutional Research

Functions	Rank							Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Planning and Coordination		35.7	14.3	14.3	7.1	21.4	7.1	100.0
Budget and Finance	7.1	7.1	21.4	7.1	14.3	14.3	14.3	85.7
Studies of Students	7.1		21.4		14.3	7.1	28.6	92.9
Faculty Studies	7.1		7.1	14.3	7.1	14.3	21.4	92.9
Space Utilization		14.3	28.6	7.1	14.3			100.0
Coordination and Completion of Questionnaires		28.6		28.6	7.1	21.4	7.1	100.0
Adapting Reporting Mechanisms	7.1		7.1	28.6	21.4		14.3	100.0
Reports to Outside Agencies	71.4	14.3			14.3			100.0

NOTE: Entries represent per cent of total responding to each function.

While preparing reports for external agencies consumed much of the time of these institutional research agencies, several directors mentioned that doing special studies for the administration was their first priority. One director labelled such tasks "fire-fighting for the president." Another explained that priorities were often shifted to "stamp out fires" for the president. These special assignments were usually more frequent when the legislators made twenty-four hour requests for data from State Council, which, in turn, demanded immediate responses from the institution.

All of the directors in the large institutions and one director from a medium size institution rank-ordered planning and coordination as the second major job responsibility of their offices. One institutional research agency, in particular, was heavily involved in the planning function. The office was responsible for the preparation of master site plans and extensive studies of space utilization, including capital outlay projections. The other offices were involved in the planning function at least to the extent of compiling cost-analysis reports for other agencies of the institution.

Although most of the offices prepared the physical facilities report required by State Council, the staff in some offices in the medium size colleges and universities were also responsible for doing the actual measuring of

the facilities involved. Several directors were also charged with numbering buildings and rooms, and at least one director made recommendations for assignment of office spaces. Space utilization studies received considerable attention at those institutions which had space problems. An institution was described as having a space problem if either it were cramped for space or it had "too much space" as defined by State Council. One director declared that his college had "no space problem"--thus his office had "no responsibility for physical facilities."

Further evidence that the external environment influenced the functions of the offices of institutional research was provided by the fact that the majority of the directors indicated that the coordination and completion of questionnaires was centralized in their offices. In fact, one president returned this researcher's questionnaire with the explanation that the office of institutional research was the only agency on his campus charged with responding to such requests. In general however, most of the offices did not have the sole responsibility for responding to questionnaires, but were charged with editing them to assure the accuracy of the data they contained.

All of the offices of institutional research were essentially management oriented relative to the functions they performed; that is, the offices concentrated on

activities designed to assess institutional efficiencies. Although one director indicated that twenty-five to thirty per cent of his institutional research program focused on the academic "side of the house" and several directors prepared "studies" for internal analyses generated from faculty and student data requested by external agencies, most of the offices were minimally involved in what Saupe and Montgomery (1970, p. 8) labeled "Studies in Support of Educational Development." In general, when such studies were conducted they were conducted at the initiative of the director. Moreover, as Table IX shows, fifty per cent of the directors indicated they conducted most studies upon their own initiative, while the other fifty per cent indicated that the studies they conducted were usually assigned to the office by the administration.

TABLE IX
Initiators of Institutional Research Studies

Initiator	Number of Agencies
Director of Institutional Research	7 (50%)
Member of Central Administration	7 (50%)

Some of the directors who indicated that the studies were usually assigned by the administration noted that they had the freedom to conduct certain studies but did not

have the time to do so. A few directors alleged that in the past few years the only studies they had initiated were summary reports and grade distribution studies. The summary reports, usually consisting of data obtained from various State Council forms, presented analyses appropriate for internal use. About fifty per cent of the offices presented these summarized reports in a "fact book", which was often broadly distributed to administrators and faculty members. The director at one of the small institutions made these data available to his constituents but did not publish a "fact book."

In order to ascertain how the directors determined areas needing research or evaluation on their campuses, the directors were asked whether their offices had an advisory committee. None of the offices had a formal advisory committee. One director remarked that he had simply procrastinated in establishing such a committee, while another director described an informal committee that he utilized. This committee consisted of four or five faculty members who had expertise in statistics and research design. The committee reviewed various projects and assisted students and other faculty members in setting up certain studies. Several directors indicated that they tried to gather facts and figures related to "issues on the horizon" as perceived by the institutional

research staff. One director remarked that most of the activities performed by his office were suggested by the president; "in fact", he added, "the president literally runs things." A director at a medium size institution sent out a data needs survey form designed to determine areas needing research on his campus. He concluded that the form was not very effective since he received only one request for "trivial information". He attributed the lack of response to two factors: (1) most people needed the information but did not know what questions to ask to get it and/or (2) people simply did not take the time to request the information.

Although one-half of the directors initiated most of the studies conducted by their offices, only one director said that he had a relatively "open" policy regarding the distribution of the studies conducted by the office. Most of the directors responded that they disseminated the studies to the individuals requesting it. If the studies were of an academic nature, they were generally sent to the chief academic officer. Several officials released their studies to deans or department heads as they saw fit. One director mentioned that he released studies only on a "needs to know basis." For the most part, his studies were distributed to the president, and to line officers involved in the study who had a need to know the results of the study. One director sent most of his studies to the presidential staff,

while another director distributed studies on "the basis of their nature." All of the directors noted that certain studies, especially those containing faculty data, were generally restricted to the president.

Summary

Three forms of organizational structure were evident among the offices of institutional research in Virginia's public senior colleges and universities. In ten of the fourteen institutions, formalized institutional research operations were centralized under a full-time administrative official. In one college institutional research was under the direction of an official who held part-time appointments in institutional research and computer services. In the other three colleges no central program of institutional research existed, although external reporting requirements were coordinated by an official who held another title.

Although an office of institutional research existed in all of the medium size and large colleges and universities, institutional research activities were not conducted exclusively by the office of institutional research. Several other agencies--such as counseling centers, registrars and faculty committees--often engaged in various aspects of institutional study. In some cases there appeared to be considerable cooperation between some of

these agencies.

Administratively, one-half of the directors were responsible to a vice-president. About one-third of the directors reported to the president, while the remainder reported to other administrative officials. The professional staff of the offices in the large institutions consisted of at least two persons. One-half of the offices in the medium size institutions claimed two professionals, while in the small institutions the only person assigned to institutional research was the "director" of the office.

For the most part, the specific functions of the offices of institutional research were not well-defined; rather, the primary functions of the offices seemed to evolve as the needs of the institution expanded and changed. More than seventy per cent of the directors, however, indicated that preparing reports to external agencies was the major job responsibility of their offices. The other specific functions of these offices varied as much as the institutions themselves varied, or as much as the primary interests of the persons charged with institutional research responsibilities varied. On the whole, however, the primary functions performed by the offices of institutional research could be characterized as essentially administratively-oriented. These functions could

be classified into five categories: (1) coordinate and respond to questionnaires; (2) prepare summary reports; (3) predict things of concern such as student enrollments; (4) perform a planning function; and (5) assist the administration and various institutional agencies in conducting certain studies. Although one director reported that his office devoted twenty-five to thirty per cent of its effort toward academic activities, most of the offices carried out few studies of program evaluation or other academically-oriented research.

In performing these various functions, fifty per cent of the directors reported that most of the related studies were assigned to the office by the administration. The other directors indicated that most of the studies associated with their offices were conducted upon their own initiative. Policies regarding the distribution of these studies ranged from a basically "open" policy to dissemination on a "needs to know basis" only.

Nature and Frequency of Academic Activities

This section presents the nature and frequency of academically-oriented studies that were undertaken during the past three years by the Virginian institutions. For the purposes of this study, three categories of academically oriented studies were identified: (1) studies of

students; (2) studies of faculty; and (3) studies of curriculum and instruction.

As indicated in Table X, attrition was the most frequent type of student study reported. Eleven out of thirteen directors reported an attrition study that was recent or current.

TABLE X

Per Cent of Institutional Research Offices
Reporting Given Types of Studies of Students

Types of Studies	Institutional Size			Totals
	Small	Medium	Large	
Attrition	100	83	75	85
Transfer	100	67	75	77
Admissions	100	67	50	69
Student Characteristics	100	50	50	62
Socio-economic Factors		50	50	46
College Environment	33	50	50	46
Teaching and Learning	33	33	50	38
Studies on Values		33	50	31
Student Personality	33	50		31
Alumni		67		31
Special Themes		17		8

While attrition studies were conducted routinely at some institutions, the director at one of the large urban universities indicated that the current attrition study at his institution was an outgrowth of requests from the Office of Civil Rights pertaining to attrition among minority students. In addition, several directors were concerned about increasing attrition rates since the State of Virginia allocated funds on the basis of the ratio of freshmen to upperclassmen. Hence, it is not surprising to learn that transfers was the next type of student study reported in order of frequency. Notice that all of the small colleges reported both of these types of student studies as being recent or current. The next two types of student studies, admissions and student characteristics, were also major concerns of all of the small colleges. The director at one of these institutions viewed all of these studies as interrelated. He was currently conducting a study on freshmen and their adjustment to college, as well as, a study to determine reasons students apply to his institution and then go elsewhere.

The other types of student studies were not conducted routinely by any of the offices of institutional research. Faculty members often conducted such studies at the small institutions. At one of the small colleges a psychology

professor had conducted several studies on the intellectual-characteristics of students. The office of institutional research staff at one of the medium-sized institutions conducted few studies on students. Rather, by unwritten mutual agreement, the counseling center handled such studies. The counseling center had conducted studies on such topics as students' attitudes, sex practices, how freshmen perceive themselves, what freshmen want to do after graduation, and smoking pot.

Studies of academic structure were by far the most frequent type of faculty study reported, as shown in Table XI.

TABLE XI

Per Cent of Institutional Research Offices Reporting
Given Types of Studies of Faculty

Types of Studies	Institutional Size			Total
	Small	Medium	Large	
Academic Structure	33	67	75	62
Recruitment		50	75	46
Tenure and Promotion Policies	33	33	50	38
Faculty-Institution Interaction	33	17	50	31
Faculty Development	33	17	50	31
Teaching Effectiveness	67	17	25	31
Faculty Participation in Governance		17	25	15
Faculty-Student Interaction			25	8

In general, these "studies" were compilations of statistics requested by the State Council. A majority of the institutions, however, routinely analyzed the grade point averages of students enrolled in the various schools and departments.

One institutional researcher had compiled such data to depict a ten-year period. While more than 75 per cent of the offices of institutional research participated in faculty studies in a peripheral way, a staff person at one of the large institutions devoted approximately fifty per cent of his time assisting departments and colleges with their internal studies or problems. A current project entailed assisting the head of the English Department in comparing the grading patterns of the graduate teaching assistants with the grading patterns of other members of the English Department.

The next type of faculty study that was most frequently mentioned was recruitment. None of the small colleges had participated in a recruitment study, while seventy-five per cent of the large institutions had given attention to the matter. The director at one of the small institutions reported that his college had very little faculty turnover. He mentioned that the institution was moving toward a condition of steady state, and that generally faculty projects were given a low priority. Though the rate of faculty turnover was decreasing at the large institutions, concern was manifested for recruiting top-notch scholars for certain speciality programs. The next type of faculty study, tenure and promotion policies, acknowledged the lowering of the rate of faculty turnover that was evident at practically all of the institutions. The next three

types of faculty evaluation studies were mentioned with the same degree of frequency. However, the large institutions tended to place greater emphasis on faculty-institutional interaction and faculty development than the medium-sized and small institutions. The small institutions seemed more willing than the other colleges and universities to participate in studies of teaching effectiveness. The last two types of studies, faculty participation in governance and faculty-student interaction, were being undertaken by about only two in thirteen and one in thirteen institutions, respectively.

The academic calendar was the most frequent type of curriculum and instruction study reported, as Table XII indicates. Approximately forty-six per cent of the institutions had studied their academic calendar since 1972.

TABLE XII

Per Cent of Institutional Research Offices Reporting Given Types of Studies of Curriculum and Instruction

Types of Studies	Institutional Size			Total
	Small	Medium	Large	
Academic Calendar	67	33	50	46
Program Evaluation	67	33		31
Effect of Graduate Education or Undergraduate		33	25	23
Effectiveness of Technology		17	25	15
Evaluation of Non-traditional Educational Programs			17	8
Pre-requisites				
Modes of Organizing Teaching and Learning				

The next most frequently mentioned study in this category, program evaluation, was being undertaken by the small and medium size institutions only. None of the large institutions reported current or recent studies in this area. None of the other studies listed in this category was mentioned by more than twenty-three per cent of the institutions. Only one director reported undertaking a study of evaluation of non-traditional educational programs. Two types of studies, pre-requisites and modes of organizing teaching and learning, were not mentioned by any of the institutions. Two basic reasons are suggested for the low frequencies reported in this category: (1) most directors viewed program evaluation as a function of departments and schools and (2) the "other side of the house," management operations, demanded much of the time of offices of institutional research.

With respect to academically oriented studies, directors generally agreed that studies of students received the greatest emphasis in their respective institutions. In the majority of the institutions faculty studies and curriculum and instruction were considered provinces of the faculty; and the directors either accepted this "established tradition," reasoned that the scarcity of time did not permit such "luxuries", or argued that studies of this nature were of no concern to the office of institutional research. One director observed that it was very difficult to do faculty studies at his institution since many faculty members considered

such studies a threat and refused to cooperate. Another director bluntly stated: "I am not interested in having this office spend time in finding out how many faculty we have with purple pajamas." On the other hand, several directors saw a real need for program evaluations by offices of institutional research. The directors at a medium-sized institution alleged that some courses offered in the various curricula at his college were outdated. He perceived an inconsistency between what was being taught and what students ought to be learning. This director had devoted major efforts to program evaluation during the early years of his office, but current demands precluded such activities. A study that he conducted four years ago resulted in eliminating a course in the history of education as a requirement for all education majors.

Table XIII offers further insights into the nature of some of the studies that were categorized in this study as being academically oriented.

TABLE XIII

Selected Recent and Current Academic Studies Undertaken
by Offices of Institutional Research

Title or Description of Studies
1. Mean S.A.T. Scores of Entering Freshmen 1965-66 through 1974-75.
2. Distribution of S.A.T. Scores of Entering Freshmen by Sex, Fall 1974-75
3. Undergraduate Admissions
4. Transfer Students
5. Distribution of Undergraduate Grades by Fields of Study (A 5-year study)
6. Academic Suspensions in the College of Arts and Sciences
7. Undergraduate and Graduate Professional Admissions
8. Academic Progress of Graduate Students
9. Analysis of Grades Earned by Undergraduate Students
10. Enrolled in Regular Session (A 7-year study)
11. Self-study for National Council of Teacher Education
12. Selected Characteristics of Full-Time Faculty
13. Student Follow-up Studies
14. Fall Grade Study (Fall, 1974)
15. Status of Undergraduate Classes Entering in 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, and 1969 - Five Years After Entrance
16. Survey of Faculty Activities
17. Alumni Follow-up Study
18. Graduates Intentions and Attitudes Survey
19. Profile of Entering Freshman Class 1970-1973
20. Comparative Entrance Requirements, Undergraduates, Matriculants Compared to Other Selected Universities-Fall 1973
21. Post Secondary Educational Plans of Local High Schools
22. Majors Declared by Undergraduates (3-year study)
23. Dean's List of Distinguished Students (7-year study)
24. Academic Suspensions: 1967-73
25. Educational Background of Bachelor Degree Recipients through 1973

Summary

For the purposes of this investigation, three categories of academically oriented studies were identified:

(1) studies of students, (2) studies of faculty and (3)

studies of curriculum and instruction. Of eleven listed types of student studies, attrition was the most frequent type of study reported. Eleven out of thirteen directors reported an attrition study that was recent or current, as defined by a beginning date of January 1, 1972. About three out of four offices were involved in transfer studies, while more than two-thirds were doing some type of admissions study. Studies of student characteristics were being conducted by sixty-two per cent of the offices. The other types of student studies were not being conducted routinely by any of the offices of institutional research. In several institutions, however, various types of student studies were being undertaken by faculty committees and other agencies of the institutions.

Under faculty studies, about three-fifths of the directors reported studies of academic structures. Less than one-half were doing recruitment studies. About one in three reported involvement in studies of faculty development, teaching effectiveness and tenure and promotion policies.

Six types of studies were listed under the third category: curriculum and instruction. The most frequent type of study reported concerned the academic calendar. The small and medium size institutions accounted for all the studies reported on program evaluation. Less than one out

three offices of institutional research was involved in this type of study, however. Only one director reported doing a study on the evaluation of non-traditional educational programs. None of the offices were undertaking studies of pre-requisites or studies of modes of organizing teaching and learning.

In general, studies of students received the greatest emphasis of the three categories of academically oriented studies. Studies of curriculum and instruction were reported by a minority of the institutions.

Selected Administrators' Perceptions of the Role and Functions of Institutional Research

One of the objectives of this investigation was to ascertain the opinions of selected administrators toward the role and functions of the office of institutional research on their respective campuses. As previously mentioned, obtaining knowledge from a specialized agency as a basis for decision-making was a relatively new concept in Virginia. It was deemed important to first gain some idea of the administrators' familiarity with the role and functions of offices of institutional research. Association with the institutional research programs at their respective institutions was the most frequently reported means by which the administrators became acquainted with the role and functions of institutional research, as Table XIV indicates.

TABLE XIV

Ways Administrators Became Acquainted With Role and Functions of the Office of Institutional Research

Methods	Administrators					Total
	Presidents	Chief Academic Officers	Deans, Arts & Sciences	Deans, Business	Deans, Education	
Staff Briefings	5	2	5	2	4	18
Institutional Research Publications	2	3	1	1	4	11
Workshops	2					2
Professional Reading	4	7	2		4	17
Association with Program	6	8	8	1	8	31
Get Acquainted			1	1		2

NOTE: Each entry represents the number of administrators indicating a given method.

Only two administrators reported that they were not acquainted with the role and functions of institutional research. These persons held administrative positions at the same institution. Several administrators listed other ways through which they became acquainted with institutional research. A president wrote that he had previous experiences at another institution. Several administrators were personal acquaintances of the directors, while an arts and sciences dean served on the long-range planning committee with the director from his institution. One vice president of academic affairs had supervised the office of institutional research at a different institution, while another simply stated that he became acquainted with the office as a result of needing its services. A school of education dean established the office of institutional research at another college and hired its personnel. Another dean served as chairman of a search committee for the institutional research director at his institution.

The kinds of institutional research activities in which the administrators were involved offer additional insights into their familiarity with the role and functions of institutional research. As Table XV reveals, data and information relating to budget preparations and completing questionnaires and surveys were the two most

frequently reported activities. These were followed closely by long-range planning, studies of faculty, and studies of students. Developing proposals for grants and fund raising were the least frequently reported activities. It is interesting to note that one of these, developing proposals for grants, was the only activity reported by the two administrators who responded that they were not acquainted with the role and functions of institutional research. Other activities listed by the administrators included: faculty work load analyses, faculty salaries, and enrollment projections.

TABLE XV

Activities For Which Administrators Used Data Generated By The Office of Institutional Research

Activities	Administrators					Totals
	Presidents	Chief Academic Officers	Deans, Arts & Sciences	Deans, Business	Deans, Education	
Budget	9	11	7	3	9	49
Complete Questionnaires	11	11	7	5	7	41
Long-range Planning	9	11	8	3	7	38
Students	9	9	5	3	9	35
Space Utilization	10	10	6	3	6	35
Faculty	10	9	7	1	5	32
Accreditation	5	7	2	3	7	24
Curriculum	6	5	4	1	5	21
Proposals	3	1	1	2	5	12
Fund Raising	2				2	4

NOTE: Each entry represents the number of administrators indicating a given activity.

At least sixty per cent of the administrators had had occasion to utilize data or information generated by the office of institutional research for six of the ten listed activities. This probably indicates not only that most of the administrations were familiar with some of the functions of the office but that they perceived the office as an information agency for the college or university.

While most institutional research offices must of necessity be involved in data collection and reporting, not all offices included data analysis and interpretation in their reports. Approximately forty per cent of the administrators viewed the major function of institutional research as engagement in data analysis and interpretation, as well as, data collection. One administrator specifically wrote that he wanted "to see more analysis and interpretation rather than just basic facts." While some of the studies that were issued by the office of institutional research were interesting, he complained that he had had difficulty interpreting the application of such information to the problems faced by his office. Saupe and Montgomery (1970) surmised that increasingly staff work was being associated with institutional research. Staff work, among other things, involved developing position papers on issues and problems of

institutional concern. Table XVI indicates that about one-third of the administrators thought that the office ought to write position papers involving specific policy decisions. Although the opinions of the other administrators were fairly well distributed among the three suggested functions, almost two-thirds of the presidents conceived the office as being primarily engaged in data analysis and interpretation, suggesting that in general, the presidents viewed the role of institutional research as a contributor to decision making, but not as a participant in policy formulation.

TABLE XVI

MAJOR FUNCTIONS OF THE OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AS PERCEIVED BY ADMINISTRATORS
Percentage Distribution

Function	Administrators					(N=53) Totals
	Presidents	Chief Academic Officers	Deans, Arts & Sciences	Deans, Business	Deans, Education	
Data Collection		33	31	33	36	26
Analysis	64	25	46	33	27	40
Development of Position Papers	36	42	23	33	36	34

In some colleges and universities institutional research focused on the development of administrative information and related special studies, in others the institutional research effort concentrated on general educational concerns such as student development, curriculum, and instruction. When the administrators were asked to give their opinions regarding the focus of the research studies conducted by the office of institutional research on their campuses, seventy per cent of them responded that the studies ought to aim at the major concerns of the total institution. If the total institution is interpreted to include specific administrative areas, then as indicated in Table XVII ninety-five per cent of the administrators preferred the global role.

TABLE XVII

MAJOR FOCUS OF THE OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AS PERCEIVED BY ADMINISTRATORS
Percentage Distribution

Major Concerns	Administrators					(N=52) Totals
	Presidents	Chief Academic Officers	Deans, Arts & Sciences	Deans, Business	Deans, Education	
Total Institution	64	50	100	67	64	70
Specific Administra- tive Areas		17		17		5
Both	36	33		17	36	25

Although only five per cent of the administrators regarded the major focus of the research studies as being concerned with specific administrative areas, more than one-third of them, according to Table XVIII, regarded the office as the arm of the administration.

TABLE XVIII

ADMINISTRATORS' PERCEPTIONS: TO WHICH GROUP IS THE OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH CONSIDERED AN ARM?

Percentage Distribution

Groups	Administrators					(N=53) Totals
	Presidents	Chief Academic Officers	Deans, Arts & Sciences	Deans, Business	Deans, Education	
Total Institution	82	67	77	33	36	62
Administration	18	33	23	67	55	36
Faculty					9	2
All Three						

None of the groups of administrators considered the office of institutional research as an arm of the faculty, although a dean of one school of education considered the offices as an arm of all three: the total institution, the administration and the faculty. Differing interpretations were probably given to this question. For example, one administrator wrote that he regarded the office of institutional research as an arm of the total institution from the perspective that results from certain studies were often disseminated on a university-wide basis.

Even though a majority of the administrators regarded the office of institutional research as an arm of the total institution, Table XIX shows that more than half of them agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the director ought to be the president's "right-hand man." The presidents were practically unanimous in agreeing with the suggestion that the director ought to be their "right-hand man", while a majority of the deans of the schools of arts and sciences and the academic vice presidents were not in agreement with the idea.

TABLE XIX

ADMINISTRATORS' PERCEPTIONS: SHOULD THE DIRECTOR BE THE COLLEGE PRESIDENT'S "RIGHT-HAND MAN"?
Percentage Distribution

Attitudes	Administrators				(N=49) Totals
	Presidents	Chief Academic Officers	Deans, Arts & Sciences	Deans, Business	Deans, Education
Strongly Agree	100		8	17	60
Agree		36	25	50	20
Disagree		55	67	33	20
Strongly Disagree		9			
					16
					45
					37
					2

Moreover, one academic vice-president suggested that the president's "right-hand man" ought to be the vice-president for academic affairs. Several administrators qualified their responses by adding that the president needed many right-hand men; and that the director ought to be one of them. Another administrator perceived the director as being a "member of the total senior administrative group" and "not just an aide-de-camp to the president." A dean of one of the schools of education proposed that the office of institutional research ought to function as a "third party in that it should be no one's man", rather "it should conduct research and present findings and answers that people generally don't want to hear"; it should "test sacred assumptions, raise questions."

Perceptions of administrators toward the role and functions of offices of institutional research were also ascertained by analyzing the extent to which the administrators indicated the office of institutional research on their particular campuses should be involved in certain types of studies. For the purposes of this investigation, these studies were classified as: studies of students, studies of faculty, studies of curriculum and instruction, and studies of institutional planning and space utilization.

Responses to Part II of the Administrators' Questionnaire (Table B-2, Appendix B) disclosed that a majority of the administrators perceived the office of institutional research as a service operation, that is, an agency that should assist those primarily responsible for the studies--either with design or implementation. However, with respect to studies of students almost two-thirds of the administrators was of the opinion that the office of institutional research should either coordinate attrition studies or assume primary responsibility for them. In general, it appeared that the administrators perceived the office as playing a more extensive role in studies of students than in studies of the faculty. Approximately one-third of the administrators perceived such faculty studies as faculty-student interaction, teaching effectiveness, faculty participation in governance, and tenure and promotion policies as not being relevant to their institutions or as not being of concern to the office of institutional research.

The percentages of administrators indicating that the office of institutional research should assume and maintain primary responsibility for studies of curriculum and instruction were small--ranging from fifteen per cent to four per cent. These low percentages probably can be interpreted to mean that in general, the administrators

did not perceive the office of institutional research in the role of evaluator of institutional programs. If the studies listed under Studies of Institutional Planning and Space Utilization are considered as administratively oriented studies, then an average of fifty-eight per cent of the administrators can be regarded as responding that the office of institutional research should either coordinate or assume primary responsibility for such studies. These responses suggest that a majority of the administrators perceived the office as focusing on management concerns.

An examination of the administrators' responses relative to institutional size (See Table B-2, Appendix B) gave evidence that the perceptions of the administrators in the small and medium-sized institutions were similar regarding the extent of involvement of the institutional research effort in studies of students. More than one-third of the administrators in the large colleges and universities believed the office of institutional research should not be concerned with such student studies as: college environment, special themes, and studies on values. On the other hand, less than one-fourth of the administrators in the medium-sized institutions and only from eight to fifteen per cent of those in the small

colleges held this attitude. Likewise, more than one-half of the administrators in the large institutions regarded studies of student personality and attitudes as being out of the province of institutional research; while only seventeen per cent of the administrators in the medium-sized institutions and only one out of thirteen administrators in the small institutions were of this opinion.

The patterns of responses of administrators relative to studies of faculty showed greater variation. While fifty-nine per cent of the administrators from the large institutions were inclined to let the office of institutional research coordinate or assume major responsibility for studies of faculty development, only twenty-two per cent and thirty-one per cent of the administrators in the medium-sized and small institutions, respectively, were bent in this direction. Yet, from sixty-five to seventy-one per cent of the administrators from the large institutions believed that the office of institutional research ought not be concerned with the following faculty studies: faculty-student interaction, faculty participation in governance, and tenure and promotion policies. On the average, one-third of the administrators in the medium-sized institutions and about fifteen per cent of those in the

small colleges shared this view. It is interesting to note that while three of the twenty-three administrators in the medium-sized colleges and universities perceived studies of teaching effectiveness as being the primary responsibility of the office of institutional research--none of the administrators in the small and large institutions held this view. It must be noted, however, that while nearly one-half of the administrators in the large institutions thought studies of teaching effectiveness ought not be the concern of the office of institutional research, only about one-fourth of the administrators in the small colleges were in agreement. In general, administrators in the large institutions thought that the office of institutional research should have less involvement in studies of curriculum and instruction than the other administrators. For example, seventy-one per cent of the administrators in the large institutions held the attitude that studies of pre-requisites were either not relevant to their institutions or were not the concerns of the office of institutional research. In contrast, an average of about one-third of the other administrators expressed this opinion. The perceptions of the administrators relative to studies of institutional planning and space utilization were apparently independent of institutional size.

Some interesting variations were revealed when the responses of the administrators were analyzed with respect to administrative positions. Ninety-one per cent of the deans of the schools of education specified that the office of institutional research ought to be charged with the coordination or the primary responsibility for studies of socioeconomic factors. The deans of the schools of business expressed a contrary opinion; with only one out of six deans (17 per cent) indicating that the office should coordinate such studies. None of these deans perceived the office as having the major responsibility for such studies. The response rates for the presidents, chief academic officers, and deans of the schools of arts and sciences were thirty-six, thirty-three, and forty-six per cent, respectively. On the other hand, while eighty-three per cent of the deans of the schools of business regarded studies on values as not being concerns of the institutional research effort, none of the presidents and only one school of arts and sciences dean held this opinion. Although a school of education dean from a large institution believed that such studies were not relevant to his institution, half of the chief academic officers perceived the office of institutional research as coordinating or assuming primary responsibility for studies on values. Even though

seventy-three per cent of the presidents thought the office of institutional research should play an assisting role relative to studies of student characteristics, a majority of the chief academic officers and the deans of the schools of education indicated that the office should be more extensively involved in such studies.

In general, among the various administrative groups, more agreement was exhibited within the group of presidents than any other group. Along with attrition studies, the presidents perceived the office of institutional research as being more involved in management related studies than the other categories of studies. With respect to the academically related studies, the presidents leaned heavily toward having the office of institutional research play an assisting role. It is interesting that although several administrators felt that the institutional research effort should not be concerned with studies of the role of the institution in meeting the needs of society, only one administrator --a president-- considered such studies as not being relevant to his institution.

The deans of the schools of business desired the least participation, on the part of the office of institutional research, in the academically related studies. From fifty to eighty-three per cent of them thought the office of

institutional research ought not be concerned with the eighteen (18) of the twenty-six (26) listed academic studies.

In contrast, it appeared that the deans of the schools of education preferred the most extensive involvement, on the part of the office of institutional research, in the academic studies. However, with respect to studies of students and studies of faculty, on the average a larger percentage of the chief academic officers thought the office should assume primary responsibility for such studies. The situation seemed reversed regarding studies of curriculum and instruction. A larger proportion of the deans than the chief academic officers indicated that these studies should be the primary responsibility of the office.

On the whole, the responses of the deans of the schools of arts and sciences reflected more clearly the opinions of the composite group than any other group of administrators.

Summary

Only two of the administrators polled in this survey responded that they were not acquainted with the role and functions of the office of institutional research. Most of the other administrators indicated that they were acquainted with the office as a result of association with the institutional research program (38%), staff briefings

(22%), and professional readings (21%). Thus, it was assumed that the administrators were sufficiently familiar with the office of institutional research to provide creditable responses to queries concerning its role and functions.

About one-fourth of the administrators perceived the major function of the office of institutional research as engagement in data collection and reporting. Approximately forty per cent, however, thought the major focus of the office ought to be data analysis and interpretation. More than one-third of the administrators thought the office ought to go one step further. They perceived the primary function of the office as developing position papers involving specific policy decisions.

If "total institution" is interpreted to include specific administrative areas, ninety-five per cent of the administrators perceived the office of institutional research as focusing on the total institution rather than only on specific administrative areas. Also, a majority of the administrators considered the office as an arm of the total institution. None of the administrators regarded the office as an arm of the faculty; about one-third regarded it as an arm of the administration. There was some disparity of opinions among the administrators

concerning the director playing the role of the president's "right-hand man". While practically all of the presidents agreed or strongly agreed with the suggestion that the director ought to be their "right-hand man," about two-thirds of two groups of responding administrators -- the deans of the schools of arts and sciences and the chief academic officers -- dissented.

Additional insights into the perceptions of the selected administrators toward the role and functions of the office of institutional research were gained from the analyses of the responses to Part II of the administrators' questionnaire. In general, it appeared that a majority of the administrators perceived the office as a service agency that assisted other agencies that have primary responsibility for certain studies--either with design or implementation. With respect to studies of students, however, about two-thirds of the administrators conceived the office as either coordinating or assuming primary responsibility for attrition studies. For the most part, it seemed that the administrators perceived the office as playing a larger role in student studies than in faculty studies or studies of curriculum and instruction. In fact, about one-third of the administrators thought that such faculty studies as faculty-

student interaction, teaching effectiveness, faculty participation in governance, and tenure and promotion either were of no concern to the office or were not relevant to their institutions. On the other hand, the responses of the administrators gave evidence that a majority of them perceived the office of institutional research as being essentially management-oriented rather than academically oriented.

The perceptions of the administrators relative to studies of institutional planning and space utilization seemed to be independent of institutional size. However, when viewed across institutional size the perceptions of the administrators relative to the other categories of studies showed considerable variations. Likewise, some interesting variations were revealed when the responses of the administrators were analyzed with respect to administrative positions. For example, ninety-one per cent of the deans of the schools of education indicated that the office ought to coordinate or assume primary responsibility for studies of socio-economic factors. Yet only seventeen per cent of the deans of the schools of business perceived the office as being involved to that extent in such studies. Among the administrative groups, the presidents exhibited the greatest degree of within group agreement, while the opinions of the deans

of the schools of arts and sciences were most representative of the opinions of the composite group of administrators.

A Comparison of the Perceptions of Selected Administrators
Toward the Role and Functions of Institutional Research
With the Perceptions of the Directors

One institutional researcher may classify his office as a basic data gathering agency, while another may see his office as "a participant in major university decisions" (Rourke and Brooks, 1966; p. 62). The institutional researcher may make recommendations based on his findings, or he may prefer to let his findings speak for themselves. What were the perceptions of the directors of institutional research that participated in this study toward the role and functions of the office of institutional research? How did these perceptions compare with the perceptions of selected administrators in the same institution? An overwhelming majority of the directors regarded the major function of their offices as data analysis and interpretation, as indicated by the results presented in Table XX.

TABLE XX

Major Functions of the Office of Institutional
Research as Perceived by Directors

Percentage Distribution

Functions	Institutional Size			(N=14) Totals
	Small	Medium	Large	
Basic Data Collection and Reporting		17		7
Data Analysis and Interpretation	50	83	75	71
Development of Position Papers	50		25	21

A greater divergence of opinions regarding the major function of institutional research was exhibited by the administrators, as Table XXI depicts. While forty per cent of the administrators was in agreement with most of the directors, the opinions of the remaining administrators were almost equally divided between the other listed functions.

TABLE XXI

Major Functions of the Office of Institutional Research as
Perceived by Administrators in Institutions of Different
Sizes

Percentage Distribution

Functions	Institutional Size			(N=53) Totals
	Small	Medium	Large	
Basic Data Collection and Reporting	31	26	24	26
Data Analysis and Interpretation	38	43	35	40
Development of Position Papers	31	30	41	34

None of the directors in the large and small institutions considered basic data collection and reporting as the office's major function; yet more than one-fourth of the administrators in these same institutions regarded it as the major function. The comments of one director may help to explain some of this variation in opinions. "The major function of an office of institutional research really should be data analysis and interpretation. We shouldn't have to collect the information, but right now that constitutes the major portion of our time." This director suggested that the various offices on campus ought to collect the data and make them available to the directors. The directors could then take the data, analyze them, and come up with interpretations.

In general, as shown in Table XVI, the opinions of the presidents were similar to the directors regarding the major function of the institutional research effort. It appeared, however, that the opinions of the other administrators were independent of their respective administrative offices.

Another interesting observation is that only one (7 per cent) director in the large institutions considered developing position papers as the major function of the office. Yet, more than two-fifths of the administrators

in these same institutions regarded developing position papers as the office's major function. In addition, two of the three responding presidents from these institutions considered this activity as the major function. These data may be interpreted to mean that most directors in the large colleges and universities did not perceive themselves as playing a significant role in policy decisions. However, many administrators in these institutions thought that they were or should be.

Although most directors regarded data analysis and interpretation as the major function of the office, several of them reported that they made recommendations along with their studies. One director put it thusly: "Datum does not speak for itself; numbers don't say anything." Another added, "I don't think an institutional researcher is worth his salt as an institutional researcher if he doesn't make recommendations based on his interpretation of the data."

There was considerable consensus of opinions between the directors and administrators regarding the focus of the research studies conducted by the office of institutional research. Ninety-two per cent (Table XXII) of the directors and ninety-five per cent of the administrators (Table XVII) felt that the research studies should focus on the major concerns of the total institution.

TABLE XXII

Major Focus of the Office of Institutional Research as
Perceived by Directors

Percentage Distribution

Major Concerns	Institutional Size			(N=13) Totals
	Small	Medium	Large	
Total Institution	100	83	100	92
Specific Administrative Areas		17		8

One director who viewed the institutional research effort as being concerned with the total institution made the following comments:

There isn't an area we shouldn't get involved in. It doesn't mean we will have specific responsibility for it, but we should be willing to sit down and work with somebody and to say here are some basic data that we've already collected and you should be aware of this; this may help you to look at it another way. I think that's part of our role.

An administrator from one of the small colleges expressed doubt that a more active office of institutional research would prove worthwhile on his campus. Noting that he was not acquainted with the role and functions of such offices, he wrote that he perceived the office of institutional research as an unnecessary appendage of the "administrative bureaucracy." As Table XVIII indicates, a majority of the

administrators perceived the office as an arm of the total institution. The directors, however, were equally divided in their opinions. One half of them regarded the office as an arm of the total institution, while the other one-half viewed the office as an arm of the administration. (See Table XXIII).

TABLE XXIII

Directors' Perceptions: To Which Group is the Office of Institutional Research Considered An Arm?

Percentage Distribution

	Institutional Size			(N=14)
	Small	Medium	Large	Totals
Total Institution	50	67	25	50
Administration	50	33	75	50
Faculty				

A director who contended that the office of institutional research should be an arm of the administration offered the following reason:

There are three elements in the institution: the faculty, the students, and the administration. The faculty are here to teach, and the administration is here to grease the way for the faculty to teach and the students to learn. The office of institutional research can be of assistance to the administration in greasing the way for the rest of it to work. The office is not an arm of the total institution. I simply don't have time to answer to the faculty and administration. Institutional research is simply an administrative function.

Another director who described the office as a resource center for the total institution made the following comments in rebuttal:

I think everything--anything that happens at the institution--instruction, student activities, crime, vandalism, et cetera--comes under the domain of this office in terms of we should be able to provide services such as isolating a problem, evaluating it, and trying to find out what's causing it. Now that may be idealistic, but to me that's the way the institutional research office works.

A comparison of Tables XVIII and XXIII revealed that there was a considerable variation of opinions among the administrators and directors. In the large institutions, seventy-five per cent of the directors perceived the office as an arm of the administration, while the opinions of the administrators in these institutions were almost evenly divided between the total institution and the administration. The situation was practically reversed in the small colleges. The opinions of the directors were evenly shared by the two areas, but more than three-fourths of the administrators perceived the office as an arm of the total institution. The greatest degree of consensus between administrators and directors was in the medium-sized institutions. Approximately two-thirds of each group viewed the office as an arm of the total institution.

It was generally assumed that the closer the office of institutional research was to the office of the president, the greater its influence on institutional policy was likely to be. As the data in Table XXIV indicated, eighty-five per cent of the directors strongly agreed or agreed that the director of institutional research should be the president's "right-hand man." A smaller percentage (1 per cent) of the administrators had this perception, as reported in Table XIX. The greatest degree of disagreement between the directors and administrators was evident in the large institutions. All of the directors in the large institutions agreed or strongly agreed that the director should be the president's "right-hand man." Yet, forty-one per cent of the administrators in these institutions dissented to this relationship.

TABLE XXIV

Directors' Perceptions: Should the Director be the College President's "Right-Hand Man"?

Percentage Distribution

Attitudes	Institutional Size			(N=14) Totals
	Small	Medium	Large	
Strongly Agree	25	17	25	21
Agree	75	50	75	64
Disagree		17		7
Strongly Disagree		17		7

However, the responding presidents in the large institutions agreed with their directors. In the large institutions, two directors reported to their presidents and the other two reported to vice presidents. One dissenting administrator wrote that if "right-hand man" were interpreted to mean the president's closest advisor, then he was not in favor of the relationship because the director of institutional research should "work under a vice president".

Although the directors perceived themselves as their president's right-hand man, they did not perceive themselves as "yes men." One director asserted that he did not interpret the president's right-hand man to mean that he was to support the president at all times. He remarked that sometimes the findings were in opposition to the president's proposals. In such cases, members of the office of institutional research's staff often argued with the president to change his views--sometimes being successful and at other times being unsuccessful.

Another director thought the director of institutional research should "be answerable" to the president. However, he alleged that he had told the president several times, "You pay me to disagree with you. When everybody around you is saying 'yes sir, yes sir,' I want to be in the

position of being able to say 'no sir.' I'd rather be a free agent and be able to say 'that stinks!'"

When the perceptions of the various groups of administrators were compared with respect to whether the director should be the president's "right-hand man", the attitudes of the deans of the schools of arts and sciences and the chief academic officers differed considerably from the attitudes of the others. About two-thirds of each of these two groups either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the suggestion. A majority of the other administrative groups, however, agreed with a majority of the directors that the director should be the president's "right-hand man."

There was a consensus of opinions on the part of the administrators and directors regarding the extent that the office of institutional research should be involved in the type of studies listed in Tables B-1 and B-2 in Appendix B. A majority of both groups agreed that the office should play an assisting role in the design, evaluation, and implementation of most of these studies. Sixty-four per cent of both groups, however, felt that the office should either coordinate or assume primary responsibility for attrition studies.

Also, it appeared that the directors perceived the office as being more extensively involved in studies of

student characteristics and studies of tenure and promotion than did the administrators. On the other hand, while none of the directors perceived the office as coordinating or assuming primary responsibility for studies of faculty-student interaction, more than one-half of the administrators viewed the office in that role.

There was a high degree of consensus regarding the role of the office of institutional research in institutional program evaluation. The mean percentage of administrators indicating that the office should assume and maintain primary responsibility for studies of curriculum and instruction was eight per cent, while the mean percentage for directors was four per cent.

Based on the responses to the types of studies classified as "Studies of Institutional Planning and Space Utilization," a majority of the directors and a majority of the administrators perceived the role of the office as studying programs and operations that were essentially management-oriented. Moreover, several directors emphatically pointed out that their offices were administratively oriented rather than academically oriented. Some directors were reluctant to get involved in academic studies because of ten such studies were not supported nor accepted by the faculty. One director stated that his staff wanted the faculty or department to want the study. He declared, "If

they don't want it we tend not to do it." He surmised that a grade study that his office conducted had had no impact; therefore the office would not do another such study unless specifically requested. Some other directors argued that their offices were so laden with management requirements that they simply did not have the time to become involved in academic studies. One director who described his office as a heavily quantitative one declared, "You can't afford the luxury of sitting back and evaluating internally on a qualitative basis; You have to sort of focus on the quantitative and the qualitative is done in departments, I guess." Another director suggested that the office of institutional research should be involved in a very limited way in any sort of evaluation of the curriculum or the effectiveness of certain aspects of it. "Efficiency is the problem we must address," he alleged. In some institutions, committees or other agencies, such as what is labeled the Academic Board in one institution, were charged with the responsibility of studying academic programs and policies.

With respect to institutional size, in general there was a high degree of consensus of opinions between administrators and directors in the same institution. Some interesting differences were apparent, however, relevant

to certain studies. For example, with respect to studies of admissions practices, seventy-five per cent of the directors in the large institutions perceived the office of institutional research as coordinating or assuming primary responsibility for such studies. Less than one-third of the administrators in the large institutions, however, held this view. In the small institutions, all of the directors thought the office of institutional research should play an assisting role with respect to alumni studies. More than one-third of the administrators in these colleges, however, viewed the office as being involved at a higher level. Fifty per cent of the directors in the small colleges and universities thought that the office of institutional research should not be concerned with studies of the effect of graduate education on undergraduates. The other fifty per cent considered such studies irrelevant to their institutions. Two of the small colleges did not have graduate programs; this probably accounted for the opinions of these directors. Yet, although twenty-three per cent of the administrators considered such studies irrelevant, more than half of them thought the office should be involved at some level in studies of this nature.

Summary

When all six groups of administrators were compared

there appeared to be few critical differences in their perceptions toward the role and functions of institutional research. While more than seven out of ten directors perceived data analysis and interpretation as the major function of the office, the opinions of the other administrators were almost equally divided among the three listed functions: (1) basic data collection and reporting; (2) data analysis and interpretation, and (3) development of position papers. When the perceptions of each of the five groups of administrators relative to the major functions of the office were compared with the perceptions of the directors, only the presidents seemed to be in agreement with the directors. In contrast, there was a considerable consensus of opinions between the directors and the selected administrators regarding the focus of the research studies conducted by the office of institutional research. More than ninety per cent of each group was of the opinion that the research studies should focus on the major concerns of the total institution.

A majority of the selected administrators perceived the office of institutional research as an arm of the total institution. However, only one-half of the directors held this view, while the other one-half saw the office as an arm of the administration. When compared across institutional size it appeared that the greatest degree of agreement

existed between the directors and the administrators in the large institutions. When the opinions of the directors in institutions of a given size were compared with the opinions of the administrators in those institutions the greatest degree of consensus was evident in the medium-size institutions.

The director of institutional research should be the college president's "right-hand man." While eighty-five per cent of the directors agreed or strongly agreed with the foregoing statement, a small proportion (61 per cent) of the administrators indicated such agreement. The largest percentage of dissenting administrators was in the large institutions. When the attitudes of the various groups of administrators were compared, those of the chief academic officers and the deans of the schools of arts and sciences differed the most from the directors and from the other administrative groups.

There apparently was a consensus of opinion between the directors and administrators regarding the extent that the office of institutional research should be involved in the types of studies described in this investigation. A majority of each group agreed that the office should play an assisting role in the design, evaluation, and implementation of most of the studies. However, nearly two-thirds of each group

thought that the office should either coordinate or assume primary responsibility for attrition studies. In general, the responses of the directors and the administrators could be interpreted to mean that both groups perceived the office of institutional research as being essentially management-oriented.

With respect to institutional size there was general agreement regarding the participation of the office of institutional research in most studies. However, relative to certain studies such as admission practices and alumni studies, there was a disparity between the perceptions of the directors regarding the role of the office of institutional research and the perceptions of this role by the responding college administrators.

Problems and Points of Conflict

The offices of institutional research that participated in this study were not autonomous agencies existing in a vacuum, but were dynamic organizations subject to the physical and social environments in which they were expected to function. Based primarily on the subjective reports of the directors and selected administrators and the limited observations of the researcher, this section describes the potential problems and points of conflict between the

office of institutional research and other units and agencies of the college or university. These problems were categorized as: (1) problems of identity, (2) problems of operation, and (3) problems of implementation.

First, some of the offices of institutional research were apparently facing an identity crisis. In several cases the functions of the office were not well-defined, but as one director put it were "constantly evolving." In some situations, the office was not involved primarily in traditional institutional research kinds of studies but was "evolving into something else." In fact, most of the offices of institutional research were essentially fact-gathering and reporting agencies rather than participants in studies that focused on institutional self-analysis. Moreover, most of these offices were so heavily involved in meeting reporting demands from external agencies, particularly State Council, that one director exclaimed that institutional research in the state of Virginia was "molded by the State Council." Another director felt that some administrators at his institution perceived his office as an arm, at times, of the State Council rather than as an office within the institution.

The director offered the following explanation for this state of mind:

I am a representative to SCHEV (State Council) for several things--for example, the pilot study of MIS, I am doing something for SCHEV as opposed to something for the institution. Some offices don't know I am here since my only contact with such offices is in relation to SCHEV requirement. At times I feel that I'm working for SCHEV rather than for (this College).

An administrator wrote:

I perceive the role of an office of institutional research as very limited indeed! A glance at select items of required reporting by governmental agencies at the present time shows some of their inquiries approaching the inane--and at immense taxpayer expense.

Inadequate communication between the director and some of the major users of the information generated by the office of institutional research seemed to contribute to the identity problem at some institutions. The director at one institution alleged that "institutional research could not possibly be of any meaningful assistance" to department heads relative to academic matters. "I don't initiate nor am I the prime mover for such studies."

With respect to certain studies that he had distributed to various deans, department heads and vice president, this director commented as follows:

One thing that bothers me is that I send out this information which I think is good, but I never get any response sometimes. Absolutely nothing! I think its beautiful stuff. So often I query people about it, and they are interested. The dean will take it and look through it, he likes it, and he puts it away, but he's too busy to get back to it. If I draw his attention to it, he will ask some questions about it. I don't get any real strong indication from them of what they want.

On the other hand, an administrator from the same institution wrote:

Being familiar with attitudes on various campuses as they pertain to institutional research, I have found the level of frustration to be very high. Most of it stems from the fact that in many cases there tends to be a lot of input and a lot of output to and from institutional research offices. However, many persons have a hard time in taking the information and doing much with it in terms of applicability to their own specific problems. I do think that the office of institutional research ought to be more aggressive in undertaking studies which they think might be helpful to various department heads, rather than waiting for specific requests to come. I would think it would improve the image of the Office of Institutional Research in undertaking such an issue.

Another administrator from this institution indicated that he considered "good adequate projections of faculty needs and analyses of current programs" one of the most needed areas of research or evaluation on his campus. He wrote: "It is my understanding the director of the

office of institutional research does not know he has such responsibilities; we, in fact, do get some studies that are sometimes after the fact or way underestimated."

At another institution, the director described his office as a "service oriented agency" designed to provide assistance to any constituent of the college. However, one administrator from that institution wrote: "I do not think heads of departments are made aware of the activities of the office of institutional research."

The director of institutional research at one institution noted that many faculty members at his college often confused his office with the office handling sponsored research and grants. His comments could be interpreted as further evidence that some offices of institutional research were having identity problems.

Many directors complained that their offices spent so much time responding to external requests that the offices had not developed into instruments of planning, an activity that most of the directors preferred as the major responsibility of the institutional research effort.

Table XXV shows that nine of the fourteen directors ranked "planning and coordination" as their first preference relative to job responsibilities. One director preferred doing special studies for the administration

and another director had no preference with respect to job responsibilities.

TABLE XXV

DIRECTORS' PERCEPTIONS: PREFERRED JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

Percentage Distribution

Functions	RANKS							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Planning and Coordination	64.3	21.4	7.1	14.3				
Budget and Finance	7.1	28.6	28.6					
Studies of Students		14.3	21.4	42.9	7.1	7.1	7.1	
Space Utilization			7.1		28.6	28.6	21.4	7.1
Coordination and Completion of Questionnaires					7.1	7.1	28.6	28.6
Adapting Reporting Mechanisms		7.1		7.1	21.4	21.4	7.1	28.6
Reports to Outside Agencies	7.1			14.3	14.3	7.1	21.4	28.6
Faculty Studies	7.1	21.4	28.6	14.3	7.1	14.3		

Table VIII indicates that ten of the fourteen directors rank-ordered "reports to outside agencies" as their first priority and none of them gave such a high ranking to "planning and coordination". Thus, there was a high degree of incongruity between the director's preferred and actual job responsibilities. Most of the directors, however,

accepted the "realities of the situation." In other words, although they preferred to focus on other institutional research functions, they accepted the significance of the reporting function as one of the effects of the external environment on the institution. The remarks of one director probably reflected the thoughts of several others.

He pointedly stated:

One must accept the ground rules under which the game is played or they leave that game and go into another game. I accept the ground rules and agree to play by them. When I can no longer accept the rules professionally or ethically from the standpoint of my own professional desires or interests, I will go where I can better play the game.

The most consistently mentioned operational problem involved limitations in the institutional management information systems. One director lamented that his staff had to do a study on minority students manually due to such limitations. Several directors bemoaned the poor condition of the non-existence of a data base. One director complained, "When we want the answer to a simple question such as who works for us we get seven different answers if we ask seven different people." Other directors mentioned the anguish they sometimes endured while trying to put data in a form appropriate to the task. One director

stated:

Sometimes things are asked for in a different way and it's difficult to get it into that form. Sometimes one of the dean's colleagues will send him a questionnaire; he will fill out one-third of it and send the rest to me. I might have eighty per cent of the information in my files but it may literally take me days to get the other twenty per cent.

Most directors predicted an amelioration of some of these problems as a result of the interinstitutional WICHE management information system that was currently being set up by State Council. A few directors, however envisioned frustration as they tried to make certain institutional definitions compatible to those of WICHE.

For more than one-half of the offices data collection required for the reporting function was a serious problem. The problem was particularly acute in the small and medium-sized institutions which faced concomitant personnel limitations. In two of these institutions, the problem was further compounded by the lack of direct computer accessibility. However, the directors complained in unanimity about the time consumed in doing "so many necessary but routine reports." "Reporting is getting a bit ridiculous; it is very time consuming. We get good support from computer services, but they can't go out and arrange for the collection of data."

Another director viewed the time spend reporting as a major limitation of his office. He described his point of view as follows:

I should spend the major part of my time doing long-range planning, cost studies, et cetera. Right now that comes later because there is a more immediate, pressing need. In a preferred situation the reports should be so easy to generate that you never have to worry about reporting. You know you can report; then you can spend your time doing other things--the more analytical, self-analysis kind of study. But, I've found that one of the big problems is that because of the imminent and impacting kinds of reports that we are called on to make, we wind up involved in the reporting process. I have now said, -- we'll do those analytical studies when I have time.

In at least one institution the director implied that the office was not operating in keeping with his institutional research philosophy nor its original purposes. The director suggested that the major emphasis of the office ought to be directed toward planning. However, he perceived "an individual unwillingness to commit to the planning effort." He attributed this unwillingness "partially to education and partially to personal biases and management styles." Although this director reported to the vice president for planning, the director remarked that "a great many of the things that come up from the president--the president literally runs things."

Scarce resources contributed to a lessening of the effectiveness of the institutional research effort at practically all of the institutions. An insufficient budget often resulted in limited personnel, inadequate computer facilities, and/or engagement in a rather narrow range of studies. These problems produced somewhat critical outcomes in some situations. In sixty per cent of the small and medium-sized institutions, the directors were required to wear several hats. In some cases, the directors did not possess the training nor the confidence to perform effectively at all the tasks to which they were assigned. One director who was competent in research techniques and appeared to have a comprehension of issues in higher education disclosed:

I'd like to hire a person to do my cost analysis for me. I am not a financial man to begin with. I took a couple of courses in college in connection with my degree. Essentially I am not a cost and analysis man. The things I've done I just had to dig down and get them.

Although all of the directors in the small institutions wore more than one hat, a potential point of conflict was particularly manifested in one of these colleges. The vice president of the college served also as the institutional research coordinator. In addition to handling the staff functions of institutional research

this director was in a position to make critical line decisions concerning such matters as appointments, promotions, and budget allocations. It is conceivable that the objectivity of the institutional research efforts could come under attack, especially if the office were to expand its activities.

An item on the questionnaire concerned the administrators' satisfaction with the scope and nature of the problems and issues investigated by the office of institutional research on their campuses. Although an administrator from a large institution characterized the office on his campus as "a good outfit," a majority of the responding administrators expressed a negative attitude. As Table XXVI indicates, a larger percentage of the administrators in the medium-sized colleges were dissatisfied with their offices of institutional research than those in the other colleges and universities. The deans of the schools of arts and sciences were apparently the most dissatisfied group of administrators in all the institutions. One such dean wrote that the activities of the office were too limited. An administrator for a large institution thought the office on his campus needed to be more responsive to communication, while a dean from a medium-sized institution surmised that the role of the

office was not clearly established. He perceived an urgent need for the office to indicate its importance. An administrator from a small institution predicted that the institutional research efforts at his college would "grow in future years, particularly with respect to long range planning."

In general, the administrators who wrote comments were those who indicated that they were not satisfied with the scope and nature of the problems and issues investigated by the office of institutional research on their campuses.

TABLE XXVI

ADMINISTRATORS' SATISFACTION WITH THE SCOPE AND NATURE OF PROBLEMS INVESTIGATED BY THE OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

Percentage Distribution

	Attitudes	
	Satisfied	Not Satisfied
ADMINISTRATIVE GROUPS		
Presidents	55	45
Chief Academic Officers	56	44
Deans, Arts and Sciences	25	75
Deans, Business	50	50
Deans, Education	45	55
INSTITUTIONAL SIZE		
Small	50	50
Medium	28	72
Large	59	41
Totals (N=47)	45	55

Most of the directors indicated a desire to expand in such areas as planning, program evaluation and fiscal analysis.

However, given the limitations in personnel and support systems under which they operated, all of the directors said that they were basically satisfied with the scope and nature of the problems investigated by their offices.

In response to a query concerning some of the chief obstacles to optimum development of the institutional research program on his campus, one director declared, "One is limited by one's imagination." Yet, it was apparent that this director recognized that attitudes toward institutional research and the acceptance of its findings were significant factors in the implementation of an institutional research program. Evidence of this awareness was manifested in the following remarks:

An individual must find the politics of getting acceptance of whatever the facts and figures are. I have inches, no literally feet of studies adorning shelves, which have not been acted upon. They have not been acted upon because I don't understand the politics of the institution--I have no clout.

Another director who felt he did not have the necessary clout to get things done believed that he was further handicapped in his efforts since the person to whom he reported did not have the title of vice president. This director experienced considerable difficulties in conducting a faculty activities study. He noted that although

he tried to make it clear that he had the support of the president, he did not obtain adequate faculty participation until he received the active support of the vice president for academic affairs.

Several other directors complained about faculty attitudes toward various institutional research activities. A director who conducted a faculty perceptions study concluded that "there is a certain uneasiness on the part of the faculty relative to certain kinds of surveys." Another director argued that being a part of central administration was not an advantage sometimes. He made the following statement in support of his position:

Since this operation is a part of 'the administration,' anything that smacks of the administration creates a natural aversion on the part of some faculty. That hinders us sometimes. I know that there are a few people who deliberately ignore anything that comes out of this place.

The director at a rather traditional institution regarded resistance to change primarily on the part of the faculty as the chief obstacle to optimum development of the institutional research program on his campus. He felt that many faculty members were "anti-institutional research" because they perceived the office as an agency of change.

In about one-third of the colleges and universities, some of the administrators were blamed for impeding the implementation of certain institutional research efforts. The director in a large institution was especially critical of the attitudes of some of the administrators in his institution:

It's just too much bother, particularly for the older ones; they would rather fly by the seats of their pants. They've been making decisions for years; they know what they want to do; they don't want anybody to show them anything that they're doing wrong or that they could do better.

A dean from a small college, noting that institutional research was very limited on his campus, alleged that the president and the Board of Visitors had not yet realized the importance of an office of institutional research relative to decision-making. A director indicated that his president acknowledged the importance of the office in those areas related to the management of the institution. However, he implied "the administration" was not interested in the office playing a role in academic areas such as evaluating programs, evaluating the quality of instruction, and examining new modes of teaching.

Although this section focused on some of the potential problems of the institutional research offices investigated in this study, caution must be exercised

in making generalizations and comparisons. The existence of a problem depended upon several factors. Among them were: size of the institution; the age of the office; the length of time the director had been at the institution; the rapport of the director with other constituents; and the location of the office in the organizational structure. Hence a potential point of conflict at one institution was non-existent at another. For example, one would probably expect it to be a difficult task to get a study to gain wide acceptance in a large, complex institution. Yet, the reports and studies disseminated by the director at one of the large institutions were generally well accepted. This director, however, was a tenured faculty member, was a former administrator, and was thoroughly familiar with the personnel and organizational characteristics of his institution.

Summary

To facilitate discussion, the potential problems and points of conflict described in this section were placed in three categories: (1) problems of identity, (2) problems of operation and (3) problems of implementation. These categories, of course, were not mutually

exclusive. Problems of identity, which can be loosely translated as problems resulting from role definitions, no doubt influenced the operation of the office of institutional research. Moreover, role conflict and operational problems such as organizational placement impeded the successful implementation of certain institutional research projects.

The functions of the office of institutional research at the various colleges were not well-defined. They were evolving in accord with the given institutional climate and the demands being made upon the office by various external agencies. The State Council, in particular, was the prime determiner of the functions performed by the office. Most of the institutional research offices was so heavily involved preparing reports and participating in various State Council projects that they have few resources remaining to devote to institutional self-analysis--the traditional *raison d'etre* of an office of institutional research. Thus, most of the offices could not be identified as essentially participants in "a variegated form of organizational self study" (Rourke and Brooks, 1966, p. 44), but rather as official reporting agencies for their colleges. The majority of the

directors were not satisfied with the primary orientation of their offices as manifested by the large proportion of them who preferred to focus on planning and coordination instead of the reporting function.

In three colleges certain operating procedures contributed to the identity crisis that the office of institutional research faced. A comparison of comments made by the director and certain administrators from the same institution suggested that there was inadequate internal communication between the director and various college administrators and faculty members. Although one would probably expect communication to be a problem in the larger and more complex institutions, the largest proportion of administrators expressing dissatisfaction with the institutional research program was in the medium-sized colleges and universities.

A potential area of organizational malfunctioning was evident in one of the small institutions in which the vice president of the college also served as the coordinator of institutional research. Since this director was in a position to make critical line decisions concerning such matters as appointments and promotions, it is conceivable that the objectivity of the office could come under attack--especially by various faculty

and administrative groups. The impact of such an arrangement could be considerable in view of the fact that many directors attributed their limited involvement in certain types of activities to the attitudes of certain faculty members and administrators. In most institutions, certain academic studies were considered to be the province of the faculty; hence many faculty members looked askance at academically related reports issued by the office of institutional research.

Such attitudes hampered the implementation of certain institutional research efforts at some colleges and universities. In addition, about one-third of the directors complained that the attitudes of certain administrators lessened the effectiveness of the institutional research program at their institutions. One director asserted that some of the older administrators at his institution did not recognize the role of institutional research in decision making--they preferred, he alleged, to "fly by the seat of their pants."

The potential problems and points of conflict were dependent upon many factors which related to the given institution, hence caution must be exercised in making generalizations and comparisons. Although all of the offices of institutional research were operating under

constraints of staff and budget, many other problems were peculiar to the institutional environment and organizational structure of the given college or university.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

At the outset of this investigation, it was stated that this study did not begin with a set of well-defined hypotheses, but rather focused on five basic descriptive questions designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the development of institutional research in Virginia's public senior colleges and universities. The specific questions posed in this study were: (1) what were the structures and functions of the offices of institutional research in Virginia's public senior colleges and universities; (2) what were the nature and the frequency to which studies were conducted on academic policies, programs and issues; (3) what were the opinions of selected administrators toward the role and functions of the offices of institutional research; (4) how did the perceptions of selected administrators toward the role and functions of institutional research compare with the perceptions of the directors of the offices of institutional research; and (5) what were the potential problems and points of conflict between the offices of institutional research and

other units and agencies of the institution? Two techniques were used to obtain data and information relevant to this investigation. During the summer of 1975 an interview was conducted with each of the fourteen directors at his institution. In addition, questionnaires were mailed to the directors and five other groups of administrators (presidents, chief academic officers, and deans of the schools of arts and sciences, business, and education) in the same institution. A return rate of eighty-four per cent was obtained from these other administrators with one hundred per cent of the directors responding.

For the purposes of this investigation, institutions included in this study were classified as small, medium-sized, or large according to whether their enrollments were less than 3,000, between 3,000 and 10,000 or over 10,000 respectively.

Structure and Functions

Organized institutional research was a relatively recent activity in the public senior institutions of higher education in Virginia. Although the first such office was established in 1966, more than sixty per cent of the offices came into existence between 1970 and 1974. These offices were established for several different

reasons. Most of the newer offices were established in response to increased demands for the reporting of data to various external agencies. In particular, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia--the State's coordinating board for state-supported institutions of higher education--increasingly required compilations of statistical data and analyses from the colleges and universities.

There was a tendency toward the centralization of formal institutional research operations in the institutions surveyed. In ten of the fourteen institutions a full time administrative official was assigned to institutional research. In one institution the official designated to perform and coordinate institutional research activities held part-time status in both institutional research and computer services. In the other three institutions, the person who coordinated institutional research projects held another title.

In general, the offices of institutional research were designed to serve the central administration. Approximately eighty-six per cent of the directors reported to the president or a vice-president. One-half of these directors was responsible to one of the vice-presidents.

For the most part, the specific functions of the office of institutional research were not well-defined.

The primary functions of the offices evolved as the needs of the institution changed. In spite of the lack of formal descriptions of the functions of these institutional research agencies, more than seven out of ten directors indicated that preparing reports to outside agencies was the major job responsibility to their offices. The other specific functions performed by these offices were dependent upon several factors such as: size of the institution, the needs and interests of the official to whom the office was responsible, the director of institutional research, and the institutional climate in which the offices operated. In general, these functions could be classified into five categories: (1) coordinating and responding to questionnaires; (2) preparing summary reports; (3) predicting events of concern such as student enrollments; (4) performing a planning function; and (5) assisting the administration and other institutional agencies in conducting certain studies.

One-half of the directors reported that most of the related studies associated with these functions were assigned to the office by the administration. The other directors indicated that most of the studies generated by their offices were conducted upon their own initiative.

The policies in effect regarding the distribution of these studies ranged from a basically "open" policy to dissemination on a "needs to know basis" only.

Nature and Frequency of Academic Activities

Although the major emphasis of the offices seemed to be directed toward management-related activities, most of the offices participated to varying degrees in academically-oriented activities. For the purposes of this study, three categories of academically oriented studies were identified: (1) studies of students, (2) studies of faculty and (3) studies of curriculum and instruction. A majority of the directors reported that studies of attrition were the most frequently conducted type of student study. Approximately seventy-five per cent of the offices was involved in studies of transfer students while about two out of three offices were involved in some type of admissions study. Studies of student characteristics were being conducted by more than sixty per cent of the offices. The other types of student studies listed on the questionnaire were not being conducted routinely by any of the offices. It must be noted, however, that in several institutions, various types of student studies were being conducted by faculty committees and other agencies of the institution.

The most frequent type of faculty study reported by the directors was research on academic structures. The other types of faculty studies in order of frequency as reported by the directors were: (1) recruitment; (2) tenure and promotion policies; (3) faculty-institutional interaction, faculty development, and teaching effectiveness, (4) faculty participation in governance; and (5) faculty-student interaction.

Studies of students was the most frequently reported category of the academically-oriented studies, while studies of the curriculum and instruction was the category reported least often. In fact, the most frequently mentioned type of curriculum and instruction study--the academic calendar--was reported as being recent or current by less than one-half of the directors. Moreover, only fifteen per cent and eight per cent of the directors reported involvement in studies of the effectiveness of technology and studies of the evaluation of non-traditional educational programs, respectively. None of the offices were undertaking studies of pre-requisites and modes of organizing teaching and learning.

Selected Administrators' Perceptions of the Roles and Functions of Institutional Research

According to the responses to the questionnaire by five groups of administrators, it appeared that one in

four administrators perceived the major function of the office of institutional research to be engagement in data collection and reporting. About four in ten directors, however, viewed the major focus of the office to be data analysis and interpretation. Another one-third perceived the primary function of the office to be developing position papers involving specific policy decisions. While there was an apparent divergence of opinions regarding the major function of the office of institutional research, the administrators were almost in complete accord that the office of institutional research ought to focus on the total institution rather than on specific administrative areas. In addition, a majority of these administrators perceived the office as an arm of the total institution, while about one-third regarded the office as an arm of the administration and none viewed it as an arm of the faculty.

A disparity of opinions was evident relative to whether the director of institutional research should be regarded as the president's "right-hand man." Although nearly all of the directors thought the director ought to be the president's "right-hand man," only about one out of three of the responding deans of the schools

of arts and science and about the same proportion of the chief academic officers were in agreement.

The groups of administrators clearly agreed that the office of institutional research ought to function as a service agency--assisting other agencies of the institution with certain studies either with design or implementation. While the administrators, in general, perceived these other agencies as having primary responsibility for most studies, about two-thirds of the administrators thought the office of institutional research should either coordinate or assume primary responsibility for attrition studies. Of the three categories of academically-oriented studies, a majority of the administrators perceived the office as playing a more significant role in studies of students than in studies of faculty and studies of curriculum and instruction. In fact, about one in three administrators perceived such faculty studies as faculty-student interaction, teaching effectiveness, faculty participation in governance, and tenure and promotion either as being of no concern to the office or as not being relevant to their particular institutions.

There was general agreement among the groups of administrators that the office of institutional research ought to play a larger role in management-oriented studies than in academically-oriented studies. When viewed across both institutional size and administrative groupings, no clear variations in the perceptions of the various groups of administrators were apparent with respect to studies of institutional planning and space utilization. However, several differences resulted when the responses of the administrators were analyzed relative to certain academically-oriented studies. For example, while ninety-one per cent of the deans of the schools of education indicated that the office of institutional research ought to coordinate or assume primary responsibility for studies of socio-economic factors, only seventeen per cent of the deans of the schools of business held a similar perception. In general, the group of presidents showed the greatest degree of within group agreement, while the perceptions of the deans of the schools of arts and sciences were most similar to the perceptions of the total group of administrators.

A Comparison of the Perceptions of Selected Administrators
Toward the Role and Functions of Institutional Research
With the Perceptions of the Directors

A comparison of the perceptions of the five groups of

administrators with the perceptions of the directors of institutional research revealed no fundamental differences. Approximately seventy per cent of the directors perceived the major function of the office of institutional research to be data analysis and interpretation, while the opinions of the selected administrators were almost equally divided among the three listed functions: (1) basic data collection and reporting; (2) data analysis and interpretation; and (3) development of position papers. On the other hand, there was a consensus of opinion between the directors and the administrators regarding the focus of the institutional research studies conducted by the office. About ninety per cent of each group perceived the office as focusing on the major concerns of the total institution rather than on specific administrative areas.

A majority of the selected administrators and fifty per cent of the directors perceived the office of institutional research as an arm of the total institution. The remaining directors viewed the office as an arm of the administration.

When viewed across institutional size, a greater proportion of the administrators in the large institutions than those in the other institutions perceived the role and functions of the office of institutional research

from the same point of view as the directors. It must be noted, however, that a comparison of the perceptions of the directors toward the role and functions of institutional research with the perception of the selected administrators disclosed that the greatest degree of agreement existed in the medium-sized institutions. A comparison across administrative position of the perceptions of each of the five groups of selected administrators with the perceptions of the directors relative to whether the director should be the college president's "right-hand man" revealed that the perceptions of the deans of the schools of arts and sciences and the chief academic officers differed the most from the directors and from the other groups of administrators.

There was agreement among the selected administrators and the directors regarding the extent that the office of institutional research ought to be involved in the types of studies listed in the questionnaires used in this investigation. A majority of each group was apparently in agreement that the office should play an assisting role in the design, evaluation, and implementation of most of the studies. About two out of three members of each group indicated that the office should either coordinate or assume primary responsibility for attrition studies.

Both the directors and the selected administrators perceived the office of institutional research as playing essentially a management-oriented role in the institutions in which they operated.

Problems and Points of Conflict

The potential problems and points of conflict treated in this investigation were placed into three non-mutually exclusive categories: (1) problems of identity, (2) problems of operation, and (3) problems of implementation. It was conjectured that problems of identity, which can be loosely translated as problems resulting from role definition, influenced the operation of the office of institutional research. By and large, role conflict and operational problems probably impinged upon the implementation of certain institutional research projects.

For the most part, the functions of the offices of institutional research were not clearly defined. Instead, the functions were evolving in accord with the particular institutional environment and the pressures being exerted by various external agencies. Thus, at least on the surface, the offices were devoting so much time to preparing reports and participating in special projects for State Council and other agencies that little time remained to

do institutional self-analyses. Hence, in most institutions the office of institutional research was viewed apparently as an arm of State Council rather than as an agency designed to improve institutional effectiveness. In some colleges and universities, certain operating practices probably contributed to the identity crisis that the office of institutional research faced. Inadequate internal communication, in particular, seemed to create confusion concerning the function of the office.

A potential point of conflict in the organization of the office of institutional research was disclosed in one institution in which the vice-president of the college also served as the coordinator of institutional research. Since this director functioned in both staff and line capacities, this arrangement could come under attack by various faculty and administrative groups. The possible impact of such an arrangement is especially important since many directors attributed their limited participation in certain types of activities to the attitudes of certain faculty members and administrators. For example, in most of the colleges and universities certain academic studies were the domain of the faculty; hence some faculty members resisted the office of institutional research's efforts to delve into such areas.

These attitudes potentially interfered with the implementation of certain institutional research projects and recommendations in some colleges and universities. Moreover, about one-third of the directors complained that the attitudes of certain administrators diminished the effectiveness of the institutional research program at their institutions. The potential problems and points of conflicts seemed to be related to the nature and structure of a particular institution.

Conclusions

Although all of the public senior colleges and universities had personnel designated to coordinate or perform various institutional research activities, the offices of institutional research activities, the offices of institutional research were primarily liaison agencies for the State Council rather than agents of institutional self-study. Moreover, the findings of this investigation seemed to confirm the conjecture of Dressel (1974 b) that many offices were spending considerable amounts of time on the mere accumulation of data and devoting too little time to assimilating its meaning for internal decisions. The offices of institutional research at the public senior colleges and universities in Virginia at the times of this study

were essentially management oriented emphasizing institutional efficiency. This finding is contrary to Rourke and Brooks' (1966) conclusion that offices of institutional research were primarily involved in academic studies. However, it is supportive of Roney's (1970) and Larkin's (1972) later investigations that the offices were primarily management oriented.

The offices of institutional research surveyed in this study were project oriented; that is, they were engaged in studies requested of them by other offices and agencies. Although one-half of the directors indicated that they initiated most of the studies conducted by their offices, few offices were engaged in a continuous review of needed research on an institution-wide basis.

Collectively, there was general agreement between the perceptions of the selected administrators toward the role and functions of institutional research and the perceptions of the directors. However, in about one-third of the institutions, conditions of the internal climate interfered with the effectiveness of the institutional research efforts. This suggests a need to improve internal relations by possibly involving both administrators and faculty in the institutional research

processes in an attempt to establish confidence in the institutional research effort.

Suggestions For Further Study

The findings and conclusions of this investigation provided a basis for the following suggestions regarding areas for further study.

1. Models of organizing institutional research agencies in small colleges might be proposed and tested. Such models could enable these institutions to effectively respond to external demands while adequately conducting the institutional studies that are necessary for internal decision-making.

2. Further investigation into the training, experiences, and characteristics of the staffs of offices of institutional research is desirable. Such a study should identify the qualifications of the institutional research staff, as well as, assist developers of programs that are designed to train both prospective and in-service institutional research personnel.

3. Since trends indicated that offices of institutional research were essentially management-oriented, a study to determine the feasibility of establishing a

separate agency to conduct research relative to academic programs, issues, and concerns is suggested. Such an agency would help to assure that both the management and academic elements of the colleges and universities will be contributors to rational decision-making at the various institutions.

4. Studies of methods of developing plans and procedures to inform all constituents of the colleges and universities of the role and values of institutional research in higher education in general, and in a given institution in particular seem to be of importance. Such studies are necessary to enhance the creditbility of institutional research activities, and to improve communication between the office of institutional research and other units and agencies of the institution.

APPENDIX A
SURVEY LETTERS, QUESTIONNAIRES, AND INTERVIEW GUIDE

COPY OF LETTER SENT TO DIRECTORS

3415 Green Pine Lane
Virginia Beach, VA 23452
May 29, 1975

Dear

What is the role of institutional research in your college or university? What are the major functions of offices of institutional research? What kinds of studies are currently being conducted by offices of institutional research? With what kinds of studies should offices of institutional research be concerned? What are the sources and nature of internal resistance to institutional research?

These are some of the questions to which I am seeking answers as part of my dissertation for the doctoral degree at the College of William and Mary. To this end, I need your assistance. To contribute toward my obtaining valuable insights into institutional research in the public senior colleges and universities in Virginia, I hope that you will consent to being interviewed on your campus at a mutually agreed upon time.

The success of this part of my study depends completely upon the kindness and generosity of each institutional research director. I recognize that this request comes at a particularly busy time for you; however, I believe the findings will be of value to you and your college or university. A summary of the findings will be made available to each participating research director.

The enclosed questionnaire is a part of my interview guide schedule and is similar to a form that is being sent to selected administrators in your institution.

COPY OF LETTER SENT TO DIRECTORS (PAGE 2)

In a few days I will contact you by telephone in order to schedule the interview. Your cooperation in this investigation will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

(Mrs.) Janie C. Jordan

jcj

Enclosure

COPY OF LETTER SENT TO SELECTED ADMINISTRATORS

3415 Green Pine Lane
Virginia Beach, VA 23452
May 29, 1975

Dear

The need for public accountability and the demands for more accurate data for decision making and planning have been fundamental in bringing about the acceptance of formalized institutional research in the organization of higher education. The enclosed questionnaire is being sent to all presidents, academic vice-presidents, and selected deans of schools and department heads in the fifteen public senior colleges and universities in Virginia. It is designed to provide a picture of how selected administrators perceive the role and functions of offices of institutional research, and the extent to which they think these offices should conduct certain types of studies during the next few years.

The success of this part of the study depends entirely upon the kindness and generosity of each respondent. I recognize that this request is an infringement upon your valuable time; however, I believe the results will be of value to you and your college or university. The findings will be made available to the director of institutional research in your institution.

This research is being done to partially fulfill my dissertation requirements for the doctoral degree at the College of William and Mary.

Your cooperation in this investigation will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

(Mrs.) Janie C. Jordan

EXAMPLE OF FOLLOW-UP LETTER SENT TO ADMINISTRATORS

3415 Green Pine Lane
Virginia Beach, VA 23452

Dear

A few weeks ago I mailed you a questionnaire entitled "Administrators' Perceptions of Offices of Institutional Research." I realize that this is a busy time of the year for you, however, I am also convinced that the results obtained from my study of offices of institutional research will be of value to your institution, and particularly to the person charged with the institutional research responsibility.

Since the study is confined to selected administrators in Virginia's public senior colleges and universities, the success of this part of the investigation is dependent upon your cooperation. In the event you have lost or mislaid your questionnaire, I am enclosing a duplicate. I will be most appreciative if you return it to me as soon as possible.

Sincerely yours,

(Mrs.) Janie C. Jordan

jcj

Enclosure

DIRECTORS' PERCEPTIONS OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

NAME _____ OFFICIAL TITLE _____

YEAR ASSUMED POSITION _____ YEAR OFFICE ESTABLISHED _____ STATUS IN THE OIR: FULL-TIME _____ PART-TIME _____

PART I: Please respond to the following questions concerning the role and functions of the office of institutional research on your campus.

1. Some people view the proper concern of institutional research as engaged primarily in basic fact-gathering operations. Others advocate that such an office should play an important role in making institutional decisions. What do you regard as the major function of the office of institutional research?

- ☐ basic data collection and reporting
☐ data analysis and interpretation
☐ development of position papers involving specific policy decisions

2. In your opinion, should the research studies conducted by the office of institutional research focus on the major concerns of

- ☐ the total institution?
☐ specific administrative areas?

3. Do you regard the office of institutional research as an arm of

- ☐ the total institution?
☐ the administration?
☐ the faculty?
☐ other? (Please specify.) _____

4. It has been suggested that the director of institutional research should be the college president's "right-hand man." Do you

- ☐ strongly agree? ☐ agree? ☐ disagree? ☐ strongly disagree

PART II: Below is a list of types of studies conducted by some offices of institutional research. Please indicate, according to the scale below, the extent to which you think the office of institutional research on your campus should be involved in each type of study. Place the appropriate numeral in the blank before each item.

1. Such studies are not relevant to my institution.
2. The office of institutional research should not be concerned with such studies.
3. The office of institutional research should assist those primarily responsible for such studies, either with design or implementation.
4. The office of institutional research should coordinate such studies or reports for internal use or reporting to external agencies.
5. The office of institutional research should assume and maintain primary responsibility for such studies.

Studies of Students

- ___ 1. ADMISSIONS PRACTICES - e.g., effect of non-intellective factors on student performance; studies of marginal students.
- ___ 2. TRANSFER - from college to college; studies of advanced placement and student-institutional "fit".
- ___ 3. COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT - the impact of academic and cultural activities on student development.
- ___ 4. SPECIAL THEMES - student participation in governance, reform movements, "activist" youth, subcultures, student leadership variables.
- ___ 5. STUDIES ON VALUES - goals and purposes of the individual relative to the institution.
- ___ 6. STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS - studies of the superior, talented or creative student; the disadvantaged and minority groups.
- ___ 7. SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS - student occupational or professional preferences, and other career considerations.
- ___ 8. TEACHING AND LEARNING - studies of academic achievement and motivation, grading practices, testing, and other criteria for evaluating students.
- ___ 9. ATTRITION
- ___ 10. STUDENT PERSONALITY AND ATTITUDES
- ___ 11. ALUMNI

Studies of Faculty

- ___ 12. FACULTY - INSTITUTIONAL INTERACTION - e.g., studies of faculty perceptions of goals and priorities.
- ___ 13. ACADEMIC STRUCTURE - includes studies of departments, schools, faculty ranks, departmental duties.
- ___ 14. FACULTY DEVELOPMENT - includes faculty evaluation policies and procedures.
- ___ 15. RECRUITMENT - e.g., kinds of staff and size of staff that will be needed for five and ten years from now.
- ___ 16. FACULTY-STUDENT INTERACTION - in the classroom and elsewhere.
- ___ 17. FACULTY PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE
- ___ 18. TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS
- ___ 19. TENURE AND PROMOTION POLICIES

Curriculum and Instruction

- ___ 20. PROGRAM EVALUATION - includes individual and departmental; includes innovative courses, studies abroad.
- ___ 21. EFFECTIVENESS OF TECHNOLOGY - information transfer by video tapes, computer assisted instruction, and other media.

- ___22. PRE-REQUISITIES - includes specific courses, programs or curricula; extent to which requirements are enforced.
- ___23. ACADEMIC CALENDAR
- ___24. MODES OF ORGANIZING TEACHING AND LEARNING - e.g., evaluative comparisons of structured classes and relative unstructured seminars.
- ___25. EVALUATION OF NON-TRADITIONAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS - includes both on campus and off campus activities.
- ___26. EFFECT OF GRADUATE EDUCATION ON UNDERGRADUATES

Studies of Institutional Planning and Space Utilization

- ___27. INSTRUCTIONAL COSTS
- ___28. CAPITAL OUTLAY PROJECTIONS
- ___29. ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS
- ___30. TUITION AND FEES - includes studies of financial aid.
- ___31. SPACE UTILIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT
- ___32. HUMAN RESOURCES UTILIZATION - includes staffing; criteria for selecting part-time faculty.
- ___33. THE ROLE OF THE INSTITUTION IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF SOCIETY.

ADMINISTRATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

NAME _____ OFFICIAL TITLE _____

YEAR ASSUMED POSITION _____

PART I: Please respond to the following questions concerning the role and functions of the office of institutional research on your campus.

1. How did you become acquainted with the role and functions of the office of institutional research?

- ☐ staff briefings
- ☐ institutional research publications
- ☐ workshops
- ☐ professional reading
- ☐ association with the program at this institution
- ☐ not acquainted with its role and functions
- ☐ other (Please specify.) _____

2. Some people view the proper concern of institutional research as engaged primarily in basic fact-gathering operations. Others advocate that such an office should play an important role in making institutional decisions. What do you regard as the major function of the office of institutional research?

- ☐ basic data collection and reporting
- ☐ data analysis and interpretation
- ☐ development of position papers involving specific policy decisions

3. In your opinion, should the research studies conducted by the office of institutional research focus on the major concerns of

- ☐ the total institution?
- ☐ specific administrative areas?

4. Do you regard the office of institutional research as an arm of

- ☐ the total institution?
- ☐ the administration?
- ☐ the faculty
- ☐ other? (Please specify.) _____

5. It has been suggested that the director of institutional research should be the college president's "right-hand man." Do you

- ☐ strongly agree? ☐ agree? ☐ disagree?
- ☐ strongly disagree?

Comment. _____

6. Please check the activities for which your office has had occasion to use data or information generated by the office of institutional research.

- ☐ completing questionnaires and surveys
- ☐ long-range planning and development
- ☐ budget preparation
- ☐ studies of students (e.g., student profiles, course loads)
- ☐ faculty studies (e.g., promotion, tenure, turnover)
- ☐ curriculum analysis and/or program evaluation
- ☐ fund raising
- ☐ developing proposals for grants
- ☐ accreditation
- ☐ space utilization
- ☐ other (Please specify.) _____

7. Are you satisfied with the scope and nature of the problems and issues investigated by the office of institutional research on your campus?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Comment. _____

8. With respect to academic programs, policies and issues, what do you consider to be the three most needed areas of research or evaluation on your campus?

#1. _____

#2. _____

#3. _____

- 8(a) Are the above areas currently considered to be within the research domain of the office of institutional research on your campus?

#1. ☐ Yes ☐ No #2. ☐ Yes ☐ No #3. ☐ Yes ☐ No

- 8(b) If no, should they be within the domain of the office of institutional research?

#1. ☐ Yes ☐ No #2. ☐ Yes ☐ No #3. ☐ Yes ☐ No

- 8(c) If yes, to the best of your knowledge, has the director of institutional research been made aware of the need for such studies?

#1. ☐ Yes ☐ No #2. ☐ Yes ☐ No #3. ☐ Yes ☐ No

8(d) To the best of your knowledge, are any such studies in process within the institution?

#1. ☐ Yes ☐ No.

#2. ☐ Yes ☐ No

#3. ☐ Yes ☐ No

PART II: Below is a list of types of studies conducted by some offices of institutional research. Please indicate, according to the scale below, the extent to which you think the office of institutional research on your campus should be involved in each type of study. Place the appropriate numeral in the blank before each item.

1. Such studies are not relevant to my institution.
2. The office of institutional research should not be concerned with such studies.
3. The office of institutional research should assist those primarily responsible for such studies, either with design or implementation.
4. The office of institutional research should coordinate such studies or reports for internal use or reporting to external agencies.
5. The office of institutional research should assume and maintain primary responsibility for such studies.

Studies of Students

- ___ 1. ADMISSIONS PRACTICES - e.g. effect of non-intellective factors on student performance; studies of marginal students.
- ___ 2. TRANSFER - from college to college; studies of advanced placement and student-institutional "fit."
- ___ 3. COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT - the impact of academic and cultural activities on student development.
- ___ 4. SPECIAL THEMES - student participation in governance, reform movements, "activist" youth, subcultures, student leadership variables.
- ___ 5. STUDIES ON VALUES - goals and purposes of the individual relative to the institution.
- ___ 6. STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS - studies of the superior, talented or creative student; the disadvantaged and minority groups.
- ___ 7. SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS - student occupational or professional preferences, and other career considerations.
- ___ 8. TEACHING AND LEARNING - studies of academic achievement and motivation, grading practices, testing, and other criteria for evaluating students.
- ___ 9. ATTRITION
- ___ 10. STUDENT PERSONALITY AND ATTITUDES
- ___ 11. ALUMNI

Studies of Faculty

- ___ 12. FACULTY - INSTITUTIONAL INTERACTION - e.g., studies of faculty perceptions of goals and priorities.

- ___13. ACADEMIC STRUCTURE - includes studies of departments, schools, faculty ranks, departmental duties.
- ___14. FACULTY DEVELOPMENT - includes faculty evaluation policies and procedures.
- ___15. RECRUITMENT - e.g., kinds of staff and size of staff that will be needed for five and ten years from now.
- ___16. FACULTY-STUDENT INTERACTION - in the classroom and elsewhere.
- ___17. FACULTY PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE
- ___18. TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS
- ___19. TENURE AND PROMOTION POLICIES

Curriculum and Instruction

- ___20. PROGRAM EVALUATION - includes individual and departmental; includes innovative courses, studies abroad.
- ___21. EFFECTIVENESS OF TECHNOLOGY - information transfer by video tapes, computer assisted instruction, and other media.
- ___22. PRE-REQUISITIES - includes specific courses, programs or curricula; extent to which requirements are enforced.
- ___23. ACADEMIC CALENDAR
- ___24. MODES OF ORGANIZING TEACHING AND LEARNING - e.g., evaluative comparisons of structured classes and relative unstructured seminars.
- ___25. EVALUATION OF NON-TRADITIONAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS - includes both on campus and off campus activities.
- ___26. EFFECT OF GRADUATE EDUCATION ON UNDERGRADUATES

Studies of Institutional Planning and Space Utilization

- ___27. INSTRUCTIONAL COSTS
- ___28. CAPITAL OUTLAY PROJECTIONS
- ___29. ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS
- ___30. TUITION AND FEES - includes studies of financial aid.
- ___31. SPACE UTILIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT
- ___32. HUMAN RESOURCES UTILIZATION - includes staffing; criteria for selecting part-time faculty.
- ___33. THE ROLE OF THE INSTITUTION IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF SOCIETY.

REMARKS AND SUGGESTIONS:

Please return the completed form in the enclosed envelope. Thank you for your cooperation.

DIRECTORS OF OFFICES OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

BASIC DATA

NAME _____ DATE _____

1. What is the subject matter area of your professional training or background, i.e., psychology, mathematics, education?

2. To what administrative officer in the institution does your office report?

STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS

1. What circumstances led to the establishment of this office?

What were its original purposes and functions? Were these functions well delineated?

What changes in purposes and functions have taken place since then?

What future developments are anticipated for this office? By whom?

2. How many staff members are employed by the office? _____

Are they full time or part time? _____

What is their educational experiences and background?

How many graduate assistants does the office employ? _____

3. What are the major job responsibilities of your office? Rank the areas below in terms of the priority your office places on the job. (Give card to director).

- ☐ Planning and Coordination
- ☐ Budget and Finance (e.g., cost analyses)
- ☐ Studies of Students
- ☐ Faculty Studies (faculty turnover, promotions, tenure)
- ☐ Space Utilization
- ☐ Coordination and Completion of Questionnaires
- ☐ Reports to Outside Agencies (e.g., SCHEV, OCR)
- ☐ Adapting Reporting Mechanisms to Changing Needs
- ☐ Other

Rank the above areas in terms of the priority you prefer that the office place on the job.

4. In what specific types of studies or activities does your office routinely participate (e.g., enrollment projections, faculty and student FTE)?
5. In addition to these routine studies or activities, in what other specific studies has your office participated? (Have director describe selected studies - such as IFI, university impact on local economy; examine some of these reports; obtain copies, if possible).

6. Does your office conduct studies upon its own initiative, or are the studies usually assigned to it by the administration?
-

7. What is your policy regarding the distribution of your studies to other constituents (administrators, faculty, students, general public) of the college or university?

Is the circulation of some studies or reports restricted to certain administrators?

8. Please indicate the sources from which your office has received requests for data during the past three years (Give card to director).

- ☐ accrediting agencies
- ☐ central administration
- ☐ academic administrator(s)
- ☐ faculty member(s)
- ☐ staff member(s)
- ☐ faculty committees or organizations
- ☐ student committees or organizations
- ☐ governing boards
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

9. On what college committees do you or members of your staff serve as a result of your being IR personnel (e.g., long range planning, self-study?

What decisions have the committees made regarding institutional policies and practices?

10. Does your office have an advisory committee? If yes, how are members selected? What are the purposes and functions of the committee? If no, what formal or informal procedures are used to determine the areas of research in which faculty, staff or administrators need information or assistance?
11. To what extent has your office developed a data base system?
12. In general, how would you describe the day to day operations of your office?

ACADEMIC STUDIES

1. During the past three years, what types of studies have been conducted by your office on academic policies, programs, and issues? (Refer to the list of studies on Directors' Questionnaire).

How often has each of these studies been undertaken?

From what sources did the idea of the study originate?

To what extent were others in the institution (administrators, faculty, students) involved? How were they involved?

2. With respect to academic policies, programs and issues, what do you consider to be the three most needed areas of research or evaluation on your campus?

Are these areas within the research domain of your office?

What plans, if any, do you have for undertaking research in these areas?

3. Are you satisfied with the scope and nature of the problems and issues investigated by your office?

PROBLEMS AND POINTS OF CONFLICT

1. What are some of the chief obstacles to optimum development of the Institutional Research Program on your campus?
2. Assess the perceptions and attitudes of each of the following groups toward the role and functions of IR, in particular, and toward implications for change, in general.

Faculty and Staff
Alumni
Administrative Staff
Students
Community Residents
State Council of Higher Education

3. To what extent do the following areas affect attempts to conduct studies.

- Budget
- Physical Facilities
- Computer Assessability, Capability, Costs
- Role and Functions of other offices of IR
- Staff Capability
- Institutional Characteristics

4. What factors are considered by the office in determining whether to undertake a particular research study (e.g., the nature of the research, availability of data, whether study is to be a one-time study or recurring study, whether it is limited to a single phase or narrow segment of institution or is it comprehensive, does it require specialized data-gathering techniques such as indepth interview, etc.)?

Comments and Suggestions:

APPENDIX B
SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES

TABLE B-1

**DIRECTORS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH'S
INVOLVEMENT IN GIVEN TYPES OF STUDIES**

TYPE OF STUDY	Institutional Size															Totals (N=14)				
	Small					Medium					Large									
	Ratings					Ratings					Ratings					Ratings				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
STUDIES OF STUDENTS																				
Admissions Practices			100					50	50								57	29	14	
Transfer			75	25				67		33	50					14	64	7	14	
College Environment			50	25	25			100									71	14	14	
Special Themes	25	25	25	25			33	50	17		25	50	25	25		29	43	21		
Studies on Values		25	50	50				83	17		50	50	25			21	43	36		
Student Characteristics			25	25	25			33	17	50							36	36	29	
Socio-economic Factors			100					50	17	33							71	14	14	
Teaching and Learning			50	25	25			50	33	17							50	29	21	
Attrition			25	75				33	17	50							36	36	29	
Student Personality & Attitudes			75	25				67	17	17						7	64	21	7	
Alumni			100					67	17	17							86	7	7	
STUDIES OF FACULTY																				
Faculty-Institutional Interaction			75		25		17	33	50			50	25	25		7	50	29	14	
Academic Structure			75		25			50		50		75		25			64		36	
Faculty Development	25		50		25		17	33	50		50	25		25		29	36	21	14	
Recruitment			75	25				17	33	50		25	25	50			36	29	36	
Faculty-Student Interaction	50		50				50	50			75	25				57	43			
Faculty Participation in Governance	50		50				17	83			25	75				29	71			
Teaching Effectiveness	50		50					50	50		25	50				21	50	21	7	
Tenure and Promotion Policies	50		25		25		17	33	50			25	50	25		21	29	36	14	
STUDIES OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION																				
Program Evaluation		25	50	25			17	33	17	33	25	75				21	50	14	14	
Effectiveness of Technology	25	25	50				17	50		33	50	50			7	29	50		14	
Pre-requisites			50	50			17	67	17		25	50	25			29	57	14		
Academic Calendar		25	50		25		33	50	17		25	75				29	57	7	7	
Modes of Teaching & Learning		50	50				33	50	17		50	50				43	50	7		
Evaluation of Non-traditional Educational Programs	25	50	25				17	33	17	17	25	75			14	29	43	7	7	
Effect of Graduate Education on Graduates	50						17	50	17	17	25	50	25		14	29	36	14	7	
STUDIES OF INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING AND SPACE UTILIZATION																				
Instructional Costs			50		50			17		83		25	25	50			29	7	64	
Capital Outlay Projections			75		25			33	33	33		50		50			50	14	36	
Enrollment Projections				25	75			17		83				100			7	7	86	
Tuition & Fees	25		50	25			17	33	50		50	50				14	43	43		
Space Utilization & Assignment			25	50	25		17	17	33	33		50				7	29	29	36	
Human Resources Utilization	25		25	50				50	50		75					7	50	36	7	
The Role of the Institution in Meeting the Needs of Society							17	50	17	17		50	25	25		7	50	29	14	

NOTE: Entries are percentages based on the responses of directors in four small, six medium, and four large institutions.

TABLE B-2

**ADMINISTRATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL
RESEARCH'S INVOLVEMENT IN GIVEN TYPES OF STUDIES**

TYPE OF STUDY	Institutional Size															TOTALS (N=53)					
	Small					Medium					Large										
	Ratings					Ratings					Ratings					Ratings					
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
STUDIES OF STUDENTS																					
Admissions Practices			77	8	15	4	9	57	22	9			6	65	12	18	2	6	64	15	13
Transfer		8	38	23	31		22	48	17	13			18	59	12	12		17	49	17	17
College Environment		15	46	15	23		26	48	17	9			35	29	18	18		23	42	17	17
Special Themes		15	46	31	8		22	74		4	6		35	41	12	6	2	23	57	13	6
Studies on Values		8	38	23	31		13	57	17	13	6		29	41	12	12	2	17	47	17	17
Student Characteristics		8	38	8	46		4	57	22	17			18	41	12	24		11	45	15	28
Socio-economic Factors			31	46	23			52	35	13			24	47	12	18		8	45	30	17
Teaching & Learning			54	15	31		9	43	26	22			24	71		6		11	55	15	19
Attrition			15	38	46		4	30	17	48			6	47	12	35		4	32	21	43
Student Personality & Attitudes			54	31	8	4	17	52	13	13			47	41	6	6	2	26	49	13	9
Alumni			54	23	15	4	17	52	13	13			18	65	12	6		11	58	11	19
STUDIES OF FACULTY																					
Faculty Institutional Interaction			77	8	15		13	74		13			29	53	12	6		15	58	15	11
Academic Structure			59	23	8		4	52	26	17			18	41	18	24		8	64	13	15
Faculty Development		8	52	23	8		17	61	9	13			12	29	59			17	49	11	15
Recruitment		8	54	23	15		13	48	17	22			18	53	12	13		15	51	17	17
Faculty-Student Interaction		8	59	23			35	43	13	9	6		59	29	6		2	36	47	13	2
Faculty Particiaption in Governance		23	46	15	15		39	43	9	9	12		59	29			4	40	40	8	9
Teaching Effectiveness		15	54	31			26	43	17	13	6		41	53			2	28	47	17	6
Tenure and Promotion Policies		23	54	23			26	39	22	13	6		65	12	12	6	2	38	34	19	8
STUDIES OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION																					
Program Evaluation			62	23	15		22	43	26	9	6		47	41	6		2	25	47	19	3
Effectiveness of Technology		8	62	8	23		22	52	17	9	6		47	35		12	2	26	49	9	13
Pre-requisites		23	62	8	8		43	39	17		12		59	24			2	45	40	9	4
Academic Calendar		31	46	15	8		43	39	13	4			41	47	6	6		40	43	11	6
Modes of Teaching & Learning		23	62	15			26	48	17	9			53	47				36	51	9	4
Evaluation of Non-traditional Education Programs		23	54	15	8		26	35	30	9	6		41	47			2	30	43	17	8
Effect of Graduate Education on Undergraduates	23	15	23	8	23		17	48	13	22	6		47	47			8	28	40	8	15
STUDIES OF INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING AND SPACE UTILIZATION																					
Instructional Costs	15		15	15	54			30	17	52			24	18	59		4	25	39	55	
Capital Outlay Projections		15	23	23	38		9	30	35	26			35	12	53		8	30	25		
Enrollment Projections			23	31	46		4	13	35	48			24	18	59		2	19	28	57	
Tuition and Fees			38	46	15		4	52	26	17		12	59	6	24		8	49	23	21	
Space Utilization & Assignments			31	38	31			30	30	39			12	35	53		2	28	32	38	
Human Resources Utilization			62	15	23		17	35	30	17		35	29	24	12	2	17	38	30	13	
The Role of the Institution in Meeting the Needs of Society		8	46	23	23	4	23	26	35	13		47	29	18	6	2	26	32	26	13	

NOTE: Entries are percentages based on the responses of administrators in thirteen small, twenty-three medium, and seventeen large institutions.

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ABSTRACT

A descriptive study was made of the offices of institutional research in fourteen public senior colleges and universities in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The study focused on five areas of concern: (1) the structure and functions of the offices of institutional research; (2) the nature and frequency to which studies were conducted on academic policies; programs, and issues; (3) the opinions of selected administrators toward the role and functions of the offices; (4) a comparison of the perceptions of selected administrators toward the role and functions of institutional research with the perceptions of the directors of institutional research; and (5) the potential problems and points of conflict between the offices and other units and agencies of the institution.

An interview was conducted with fourteen directors of institutional research at his institution. Also, questionnaires were mailed to the directors and five other groups of administrators in the same institution. Return rates of eighty-four per cent and one hundred per cent were obtained from these administrators and directors, respectively.

Findings were:

1. There was a tendency toward the centralization of formal institutional research operations in the institutions surveyed. In ten of the fourteen institutions a full-time administrative official was assigned to institutional research. In one institution the official held part-time status in both institutional research and computer services. In the other three institutions the person who coordinated institutional research projects held another title.
2. Administratively, approximately eighty-six per cent of the directors reported to a president or a vice-president.
3. Preparing reports to outside agencies was the major job responsibility of the offices of institutional research.
4. Fifty per cent of the directors reported that most of the studies conducted by their offices were assigned to them by central administration.
5. Studies of students were the most frequently reported of the academically-oriented studies, while studies of the curriculum and instruction were reported least often.
6. The directors and the administrators perceived the office as playing essentially a management-oriented role in the institutions in which they operated.
7. Many offices devoted so much time to preparing reports and participating in special projects for State Council and other agencies that little time remained to do institutional self-analysis.

VITA

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Janie C. Jordan was born on July 13, 1936 in Norfolk, Virginia. She attended public schools in Norfolk and was graduated from Washington High School in 1953. She received the Bachelor of Science Degree in Mathematics from Virginia State College, Petersburg, Virginia in 1957.

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